



Pearson

Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2017

Pearson Edexcel GCE in
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Unit 2: Geographical Investigations

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6GE02

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The June 2017 paper was found to be accessible to candidates across the ability range. Perhaps as a result of the fact that it was candidates who had already taken the paper in June 2016 there were very few non-completed scripts. Unfortunately there was some evidence that candidates did not always have a clear focus on the question set particularly in Q1a and Q4b.

As in previous series Question 2 ('Coasts') and Question 4 ('Rebranding') were by far the most popular, and Question 3 ('Unequal Spaces') the least.

Although there was the usual range in performance there were far fewer candidates committing a rubric offence. As with the last examination series, there were some outstanding results at the top-end, and centres and their candidates are to be congratulated for preparing their candidates so well.

The quality of responses associated with the 15 mark fieldwork and research questions continues to improve, particularly in 2b on coastal management and 4b on rebranding. Due to the hard work of the centres, candidates seem to be gaining a better understanding on the demands of this part of the examination through the use of past papers, mark schemes and other assessment-focused resources. It is pleasing that many centres are continuing to use the specification to match the fieldwork and research that they carry out to the requirements of the specification. Many students are also recognising more fully the role of 'research', with some candidates explaining how they researched Shoreline Management Plans as a precursor for investing the success of coastal management. Unfortunately, as noted in previous reports, there is still evidence that candidates are writing what appeared to be pre-rehearsed responses, which in many instances were not specifically answering the question set. This was particularly evident in the Extreme Weather section where many candidates in 1b described their fieldwork and research on flood **risk** as opposed to the **impacts** of a flood event. The same was true for 4b where a significant number of candidates ignored the key word **need** for rebranding and instead described the results and conclusions of the **success** of a rebranding scheme.

As stated in previous reports, the part (a) questions are always about responding to the resources which have been provided. Rehearsing how to respond to photographs, data and maps is an important skill to encourage prior to taking the exam (e.g. by using these resources as starters at the beginning of lessons), allowing candidates to deal with patterns, trends and anomalies. It is also very important that students establish whether the task is one of description or explanation. It is certainly not a place to deliver detailed or wide-ranging case studies. Some candidates were restricted to L1 in the part (a) of some questions such as 3a as they did not offer an explanation but instead simply described the trends shown in the resource.

The final group of examination questions are those in which candidates are encouraged to use a range of examples or case study information to support their responses. It is pleasing to say that the responses to these questions continued to show the improvement noted in previous reports.

This was particularly evident in Q4c where there were some very detailed and informative responses on the success of rebranding strategies

1a

Candidates needed to focus on the possible variation in the impacts of a summer heatwave on the British Isles. Some candidates described the variation in temperatures shown on the map but did not suggest how these variations might cause variations in impacts. Impacts could be both economic and social and should have been related to the variations and unusualness of the temperatures as suggested by the resource. Many noted the advantages of such weather to seaside resorts yet also highlighted the issue for older people in urban areas. This was a question that the majority of the candidates successfully managed to obtain level 2 by suggesting one or two impacts, but few could really link the varying meteorological conditions to possible variations in impacts.

1b

Similar to the 2016 question this was testing the candidates' understanding of the impacts of a flood event – but for the 2017 paper it did not require the results and conclusions of the fieldwork and research but a description of the fieldwork and research that they had undertaken. Unfortunately, despite comments in the Examiners' report many responses to this question still focused on flood risk as opposed to the impacts of a flood event. Others described impacts of a case study of an extreme weather event such as the Boscastle Flood of 2004 or Hurricane Katrina. These answers were self-penalising. Yet it was pleasing to see in other responses a great variety of techniques being used such as the measurement of 'stand lines' for flood events as well as targeted questionnaires and interviews.

1c

The question was taken directly from the specification and it was pleasing that many candidates successfully explained why the frequency of extreme weather events were increasing. Many explained how climate change was increasing only the frequency of tropical storms but also flood events associated with mid-latitude depressions. Flood intensifying causes, such as urbanisation and deforestation, also featured in many of the better answers. A common mistake, however, was to focus solely on climate change and ignore other possible causes such as increased ENSO cycles.

2a

Most candidates successfully used the prompts shown on the resource to clearly explain the possible impacts caused by coastal retreat. At the top end, candidates successfully noted the scale of the area and outlined appropriate impacts such as the difficulties in obtaining insurance for housing and the costs of relocating the amusement park. A minority, however, saw the coastal retreat as almost a mega hazard with mass evacuations and the need for emergency housing and were therefore self-penalising.

2b

It was pleasing to see that the vast majority of candidates could describe their fieldwork and research into coastal management. The best answers

used a range of fieldwork techniques, such as bi-polar evaluations and groyne profiling, as well as useful research such as Shoreline Management Plans. Centres must be congratulated for the detailed range of fieldwork and research techniques that they have carried out.

2c

The improvement in the knowledge based 10 mark essay question that was seen last year also continued this year. A range of coastal locations from Brighton to the Florida Keys were successfully used to answer the question on coastal development. It was pleasing to see that the comments made in last year's Examiners' report regarding the need for factual data to support this answers had been acted upon with many of the best answers using population statistics as well as some key economic data.

3a

The resource was found to be accessible by the vast majority of candidates. Most could detail the likely impacts of access to services between urban and rural areas with most understanding the impacts on elderly people living in remote rural areas compared to those in large urban areas. Others noted that other groups such as young people might also struggle to obtain the goods and services they required in remote rural areas.

3b

The question was clearly focused on the results and conclusions of the fieldwork and research on investigating the pattern of inequality. It was pleasing to see that many centres had taken on board the comments made in previous year's reports and the majority of responses were successful in describing the pattern of inequality using named localities within a rural or urban area. It was also pleasing to see that IMD2015 data which has only just been available was used in some of the better responses.

3c

Most candidates were able to successfully examine the success of the strategies used to overcome social inequalities in an urban area. These ranged from large top down schemes such as the Olympic Park in London to smaller schemes that were specific to the candidates' area, such as the 'Closing the Gap' scheme in Leicester.

4a

This question proved popular with the majority of candidates and many correctly were able to suggest reasons for why the rural schemes shown could be thought of offering a more sustainable future. In particular, the sustainability of buying local foods and so reducing food miles as well as the use of renewable resources were explained well by the majority of the candidates.

4b

This was the question that, surprisingly, a substantial minority of candidates found challenging. Although a similar question had been set before on the fieldwork and research on the need for rebranding, some candidates saw this as an opportunity to describe the result sand conclusions of their

fieldwork and research in to the success of rebranding schemes and were therefore self-penalising.

4c

As with 4a many candidates wrote well on the economic success of rebranding schemes with the best examining the success by either comparing the impact on different groups of people or on the varying spatial impact of the scheme. Sport-led regeneration with the use of the Olympic Park were popular strategies.

Summary

Based on their performance in the June 2017 6GE02 paper, candidates are offered the following advice:

Ensure you use of all of the information in a resource question such as the temperature information in Q1a and sketch map and photographs in Q2a.

Read the fieldwork and research questions very carefully. They will never be a general description of a fieldwork day but will be specifically linked to key themes in the specification – this was a particular issue for Q4b.

A description of results most include some quantification of the results obtained (ie. 'This research showed that the Whyke estate area is the bottom third of all the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2015 output areas', and not qualified descriptions such as, 'This research showed that the IMD 2015 score was high'.

To answer a question that assesses the success or effectiveness of a management scheme, some detail on the scheme is essential as well as some examination of the success or otherwise of the scheme.

Please refer to previous Principal Examiners' reports on other suggestions for improving candidate performance. Centres are also reminded to make full use of the Unit 2 presentations and example work that are available on the Pearson Edexcel website and Edexcel Communities.