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Examiners' Report Principal Examiner Feedback

June 2025

Pearson Edexcel GCE in

AS Geography (8GE0/02)

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Introduction

8GE02 assesses knowledge and understanding about Globalisation, followed by a choice of questions on Regenerating Places or Diverse Places.

This year the synoptic questions focused on the sustainability of Totnes, Devon (Regenerating Places) and of Crystal Palace, Southwark (Diverse Places).

Approximately 95% of candidates answered the Regeneration option.

Candidates for the 2025 examination series have been less directly affected by school closures as a result of the Coronavirus Pandemic, as they were in years 7-8 at that time. They may have missed opportunities for primary fieldwork earlier in their years, however this year the unfamiliar fieldwork questions were about secondary data. This is a more accessible topic for many, as long as they remember what secondary data includes.

- The structure of answers for the 12 and 16 mark essays has continued to improve, with many showing the ability to organise their answers logically, making relevant connections and relationships across the ideas they discussed. Better answers also made judgements and drew coherent conclusions.

Question 1a

The vast majority were able to score 1 mark here, with the most commonly seen answers being 'across borders' or 'between countries' or something similar. Those who did not score the mark tended to make vague statements without reference to borders/other countries or confused it with intranational or internal migration and talked about movement within a country.

Brevity was possible for this 1-mark question, and most scored the mark with responses of a few words.

Question 1b (i)

This 2-mark maths question to calculate a range was answered very effectively. Most gave their working, but centres may like to note this is no longer required. If the correct answer is given, working is not required. However, it is good practice to give working, and if a mistake is made, the working may nevertheless score a mark, depending on the data used.

Question 1b (ii)

This question required candidates to use the data provided to suggest one reason why countries with a high HDI often have a high level of globalisation, as indicated by the KOF Index. In other words, candidates needed to find a reason for the relationship and needed to refer to data from the resource in their answer.

Where there was specific reference to the resource, many examples of maximum marks were seen. High HDI was usually linked to high GDP/development and to personal income, which then allowed travel for tourism or business, or else the use of smartphones and access to the internet. A number missed the third mark usually due to failing to refer to data or else gave a briefer response. A minority went round in circles saying high HDI is linked to globalisation because globalised countries have a high HDI.

These 3-mark questions with a resource are found on 8GE01, 8GE02 and also on 9GE01 and 9GE02. Candidates need to remember to refer directly to the resource in order to score all the available marks.

Some started a separate second reason which could not be credited as the question asks for one reason.

Centres are advised to practise these ‘chains of 3’ marks as a classroom activity. One student could identify a reason, and a second and then a third student could build on their answer, perhaps each beginning with the word ‘because’. This skill is useful for the 3- and 4-mark questions on all GCE papers, so it is well worth developing. The 4-mark questions do not have a resource.

Question 1c

Again, this question was generally well answered, and 3 or 4 marks were frequently awarded. Candidates were asked to explain two reasons why national governments promote free trade blocs.

Very few candidates scored 0 marks unless the question was unanswered. Most candidates could give two clear reasons and often expanded for the second mark in each case. Some repeated the expansion point in the second response, so only scored 3 marks.

The main reasons given were reduction of tariffs and quotas and access to new markets. Some candidates did not really understand what a quota was and how it worked, and some were unable to explain how access to a new market benefited a country and therefore why a government might seek to join a trade bloc.

Question 1d

In response to the question to explain why there are variations in environmental problems caused by manufacturing, most candidates scored 3 or 4 marks.

Different approaches were acceptable, and there was an almost equal split between candidates who focused on variation in types of pollution and those who looked at the reasons for the current spatial distribution of manufacturing linked to global shift/cheap wages/ lack of regulations.

The question provided the opportunity for candidates to use case study material to support their answers. Some strong case study material was seen, particularly contrasting UK regulation and monitoring of pollution with SE Asian countries and associated industries.

Deindustrialisation answers often mentioned Detroit or Redcar. Some candidates strayed into writing about primary industry, particularly extraction of oil in the Niger Delta thus restricting their responses.

Some more generalised answers about water and air pollution did not move out of level 1 unless they tied this to specific industries or locations.

To achieve 5 or 6 marks, fuller knowledge of the reasons for the variation identified was required.

Question 1e

This essay differentiated well, and there were good essays seen when candidates focused on the question which asked them to assess the role of transnational corporations (TNCs) in increasing global connections. A number wrote general essays about the costs and benefits of TNCs which tended to score low level 2 marks if there was a little exemplification.

Many candidates showed good knowledge and understanding from both AO1 and AO2 sections of the mark scheme. There was frequent reference to major TNCs such as Apple, Dyson and McDonalds for support. Candidates made links to different sectors of industry for example explaining about outsourcing and offshoring and the reasons for it.

As this was a 'role of' question, other factors which increase global connections were explored by candidates. There was some difference in what the candidates thought of as 'other factors'. Some referred to the travel and communication TNCs such as EasyJet and Apple, or to containerisation and Maersk. Stronger candidates then made judgments about the global connections facilitated by these TNCs to enable other businesses to develop their own connections through tourism or outsourcing.

Some discussed the role of TNCs in building cultural connections, for example Disney adaptations to local characteristics and explained the ways McDonald's globalises its food offers to meet local demand. Stronger candidates discussed SEZs, trade blocs and government censorship (North Korea) as 'others'.

However, one of the main differences in candidates' responses was the degree to which they addressed the command word 'assess'. Some, less developed answers explained the pros and cons of TNCs or gave a simple one-line judgement at the end, which limited progress up the mark levels.

Question 2a

Most were able to identify the term for a knowledge-based research and development business as 'quaternary'.

Question 2b (i)

The majority were able to select the appropriate data and calculate the percentage of the total number of people aged 16-64 who are full time workers correctly.

Some covered the space available sheet with calculations, clearly spending too long on this question, and failing to find the correct answer. Centres are reminded to advise candidates to revise basic GCSE maths skills for Geography exams, using past papers as a guide. Those who struggle with maths questions should glance at the question and avoid spending too long trying to answer it.

Question 2b (ii)

This question examined a different part of the specification (4A.1b) about one way in which the health of a person in the UK may affect their economic activity. Data was provided, and again as in 1a(iii), candidates were required to make reference to it in their answer.

The majority of candidates took 'economic activity' as employment or earning potential whereas one or two regarded it as spending or level of purchasing power. Either of these were acceptable, and using data or making a comparison helped earned the AO2 mark interpreting the data. Answers that used the resource were able to show that candidates had an understanding of the impact poor health has on the ability to work. Some wrote in a way that gave the impression they were speaking from personal or family experience. Centres are encouraged to discuss these and other ideas from 4A.1b.

Question 2c

Most candidates could identify at least one physical factor and its influence on function. There was some repetition for the second factor, but candidates often linked it to a different function. Coastal locations, beaches and rivers frequently used and linked to trade, as was flat land for development or use as a port. Location as a factor was often vague but scored a mark.

Problems arose when candidates did not focus on 'physical' factors and so their responses didn't fit the question. Some candidates seemed to use their fieldwork location which worked well on most occasions, but those that used more inland sites struggled, such as those who wrote about Brixton, Chelmsford, Stratford. Docklands worked if they focused on the river location for past trade or present residential buildings, but was not useful if they strayed into human factors for Canary Wharf.

‘Physical’ is a word AS candidates often struggle with, and centres are recommended to use it regularly in lessons to help develop confidence in concepts included and the ways physical geography shapes the places where people live and work.

Question 2d

This 6-mark question invited candidates to explain how international influences have shaped the characteristics of one of their chosen places.

As with Q2c, candidates who opted to write about the whole of China or the UK lacked the specific detail to move up the level-based mark scheme, and 3 marks on this question tended to be the maximum mark. Choosing one area of eastern or southern China worked more successfully.

Some answers were vague, and many lacked specific examples of the characteristics of the places they wrote about.

Most answers focused on migration of people and/or businesses moving in, and some looked at deindustrialisation due to global shift of manufacturing. Redcar was used effectively by some candidates.

Some potentially good answers were limited by generalities, and support would have easily raised the quality of the responses.

To gain level 3 marks, it is recommended candidates use at least two different themes, for example migration of people as well as the effects on the built environment (mosques, restaurants, TNCs, road signs, language and culture) to demonstrate the ‘broad range of geographical ideas’ required.

Question 2e

The 12-mark question asked candidates to assess why conflicts may occur between stakeholders involved in managing regeneration. Most candidates demonstrated quite strong AO1 understanding, with most identifying a range of stakeholders and the different priorities they have. AO2 application of ideas was also evident using exemplars to develop and exemplify the reasons for the conflicts occurring.

Candidates could identify stakeholders but often lacked specific detail either about the conflicts between them or detail regarding case studies. There were some good answers on the extension of Heathrow, and the most popular examples seen were the developments at Stratford including the London Olympics park and the conflict between developers and residents of Clay Lane etc. There were some good opposing arguments provided as to why some areas don’t have conflict and may be more successful if they are bottom-up projects.

Many did not go on to assess or even mention management. This was why many answers went no higher than level 2 (8 marks).

Question 3a

This two by two 4-mark question asked candidates to explain two limitations of this data collection sheet. Some responses require improvement, but most were able to score at least 3 of the 4 marks available.

Many candidates gained maximum marks as they were able to identify and explain two clear limitations of the sheet.

The subjective nature of qualitative data does not necessarily lead to invalid data. Much human geography fieldwork relies on such data! However, here the lack of a clear scale or guidance to interpret terms such as 'Few', 'Quite a lot' and 'Lots' were clear limitations discussed by some.

Question 3b

As with the previous question, this was generally well answered with candidates clearly understanding the need for a large enough sample size for accuracy, validity and accommodating anomalies. Simply stated, larger samples are more representative of the whole place or people being surveyed. Some were able to discuss the size of samples needed for statistical tests.

Question 3c

Candidates had a clear appreciation of risks in an urban setting, mainly danger from traffic and the risk of getting lost. Some darker experiences were quoted based on 'stranger danger'. Some missed the word 'urban' and wrote about risks in rural places.

Question 3d

Some candidates still cannot distinguish between primary and secondary data collection, which of course holds back their marks here.

Candidates struggled to assess the value of secondary data, and many failed to highlight the different stages where it was used. This latter aspect was addressed a little more than value. Few were able to assess its validity, and instead too many answers were descriptive of the secondary used, and how they had used it, and their only assessment was that it was good.

The stages candidates could have discussed in their answers include the following ideas.

The Route to Enquiry in the specification mentions secondary data as being used in Stage 2, 'Contextualising of the field work' or the planning stage, and it is also likely that centres might

use secondary data to help in Stage 6, Analysis and Conclusion section, as well as Stage 7, Critically reflecting on the results.

Secondary sources seen included the use of google maps or other online sources to help with the selection of places to collect data, use of maps to select and then find these locations, and to provide a base for the presentation of data spatially. Also, the use of weather maps and bus/train timetables to plan trips. Also, the use of past census data or Index of Multiple Deprivation data to compare locations, and use of photos from the past for comparisons with the present. Some candidates used data collected by previous student cohorts to provide comparisons.

Question 4

This question was well answered by most, as long as they gave themselves enough time to complete it.

Most candidates were able to use the resource effectively using AO1 knowledge and understanding and were able to link this to sustainability.

Less developed responses that didn't go higher than level 2 looked at Totnes' challenges and attempts to alleviate them, without much evaluation other than a summary 'therefore Totnes is/is not sustainable'.

Candidates mis-interpreted Figure 4b Unemployment rate, and missed the fact that Totnes has a lower figure.

Stronger answers started to evaluate the data from the start. For example, some discussed how 'unemployment at 2.1% is below the UK average, however jobs are low paid and seasonal'. The IEP was variously seen as good because of health benefits, income, reducing food miles and therefore carbon emissions or ineffective because a large percentage of food has still to be brought in. Stronger responses considered and evaluated both points of view.

There was little evidence of ideas from other areas of study or candidates' own case studies, although one or two candidates referred to Todmorden in relation to transition towns and Mumbai or Chinese cities in respect of the impact of air pollution on health, but not as much as in previous years. The basic evaluation that was given, as mentioned above was given at the end of each paragraph and/or at the end of the answer. Stronger answers offered an evaluative opinion as they discussed each point with an evaluative summary at the end.

Most conclusions that were not rushed gave a careful weighing of the relative importance of the pros and cons, the general consensus was that social and economic pros and environmental cons were foremost, but this could change in the future and likely that the social and economic factors would become cons. These responses also considered the extent. Some sat on the fence and said there were pros and cons to each factor, and this tended to hold back their answer to level 3.

Question 5a

Most were able to identify the location on the rural-urban continuum where population density is likely to be the lowest as a remote village.

Question 5b (i)

The majority were able to select the appropriate data and calculate the percentage (%) of the UK population which is aged 14 years and under correctly.

Some covered the space available sheet with calculations, and spent too long on this question, and failed to find the correct answer. Centres are reminded to advise candidates to revise basic GCSE maths skills for Geography exams, using past papers as a guide. Those who struggle with maths questions should glance at the question and avoid spending too long trying to answer it.

Question 5b (ii)

This question examined a different part of the specification (4B.1b) about one way in which the accessibility of rural places in the UK affects their population structure. Some did not know what population structure means.

Data was provided, and again as in 1a(iii), candidates were required to make reference to it in their answer.

Answers that used the resource were able to show that candidate had an understanding of one way that accessibility affects population structure in rural places. Centres are encouraged to discuss these and other ideas from 4B.1b in class.

Question 5c

Two times two reasons were needed here for this 4-mark question. Some candidates gave one developed idea for 2 marks, and some gave two 1-mark answers. Some were able to achieve between 3-4 marks. The question asked the candidates to explain two ways physical factors influence cultural diversity in one of their chosen places.

Problems arose when candidates did not focus on 'physical' and so their responses didn't fit the question. Some candidates seemed to use their fieldwork location which worked well on most occasions, but some struggled, such as those who wrote about Warrington who lacked a physical context for their discussions. Weymouth and other coastal locations were used to discuss cultural diversity in terms of the age of people or their ethnicity.

‘Physical’ is a word AS candidates struggle with and centres are recommended to use it regularly in lessons to help develop confidence in concepts included. Specifically, they need to consider the ways physical geography may or may not influence cultural diversity.

Question 5d

This 6-mark question invited candidates to explain how international influences have shaped the characteristics of one of their chosen places. As with Q5c, candidates who opted to write about the USA or the UK as a whole lacked the specific detail to move up the level-based mark scheme, and 3 marks on this question tended to be the maximum mark. Choosing a city or ideally a part of a city or town worked more successfully. Some answers were vague, and many lacked specific examples of the characteristics of the places they wrote about.

Most answers focused on migration of people and businesses moving in with impacts on culture and diversity or affecting the age structure of a place.

Some potentially good answers were limited by generalities, and support would have easily raised the quality of the responses.

To gain level 3 marks, it is recommended candidates discuss at least two different international influences, for example migration of people or investment. They should also consider characteristics in terms of economic or social ideas, which could include ethnicity, language or culture as well as the effects on the built environment (mosques, restaurants, TNCs, road signs) to demonstrate the ‘broad range of geographical ideas’ required.

Question 5e

The 12-mark question asked candidates to assess why conflicts may occur between stakeholders involved in managing change in diverse places. Most candidates demonstrated quite strong AO1 understanding, with most identifying a range of stakeholders and the different priorities they have. AO2 application of ideas was also evident using exemplars to develop and exemplify the reasons for the conflicts occurring. However, many answers finished there and did not go on to assess or even mention management. This was why many answers went no higher than level 2 (8 marks).

Question 6a

This two by two 4-mark question asked candidates to explain two limitations of this data collection sheet. Some responses required more development, but most were able to score at least 3 of the 4 marks available.

Many candidates gained maximum marks as they were able to identify and explain two clear limitations of the sheet.

The subjective nature of qualitative data does not necessarily lead to invalid data. Much human geography fieldwork relies on such data! However, here the lack of a clear scale or guidance to interpret terms such as 'Few', 'Quite a lot' and 'Lots' were clear limitations discussed by some.

Question 6b

As with the previous question, this was generally well answered with candidates clearly understanding the need for a large enough sample size for accuracy, validity and accommodating anomalies. Simply stated, larger samples are more representative of the whole place or people being surveyed. Some were able to discuss the size of samples needed for statistical tests.

Question 6c

Candidates had a clear appreciation of risks in an urban setting, mainly danger from traffic and the risk of getting lost. Some darker experiences were quoted based on 'stranger danger'. Some missed the word 'urban' and wrote about risks in rural places.

Question 6d

Some candidates still cannot distinguish between primary and secondary data collection, which of course holds back their marks here.

Candidates struggled to assess the value of secondary data, and many failed to highlight the different stages where it was used. This latter aspect was addressed a little more than value. Few were able to assess its validity, and instead too many answers were descriptive of the secondary used, and how they had used it, and their only assessment was that it was good.

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Question 7

This question was well answered by most, as long as they gave themselves enough time to complete it.

The difference across the responses was based on the range of points and detail as well as the evaluation. The majority of answers did show balance.

Less developed responses that didn't go higher than level 2 looked at Southwark's challenges and the attempts to alleviate them, without much evaluation other than a summary 'therefore Southwark is/is not sustainable'.

Stronger answers started to evaluate the data from the start. Stronger responses considered and evaluated different points of view.

There was little evidence of ideas from other areas of study or candidates' own case studies, although one or two candidates referred to Todmorden in relation to transition towns and Mumbai or Chinese cities in respect of the impact of air pollution on health, but not as much as in previous years. Basic evaluations were included by some at the end of each paragraph and/or at the end of the answer. Stronger answers offered an evaluative opinion as they discussed each structured paragraph, with an evaluative summary at the end.

Most conclusions that were not rushed gave a careful weighing of the relative importance of the positives and negatives. The general consensus was that social and economic positives and environmental negatives were foremost, but this could change in the future, and it was likely that the social and economic factors might become negatives. These responses also considered the extent. Some sat on the fence and said there were two sides to each factor, and this tended to hold back their answer to level 3.

Most answers were focused on the resource which was generally well used. Answers that relied heavily on quotes or lift-offs from the resources often stayed in level 2, as did essays that looked at the costs and benefits of living in this place, without really exploring what they understood 'sustainable' to mean. Evaluation was usually a sentence at the end of each section or a paragraph at the end, none of which were particularly developed.

One successful structure was to examine different themes such as economic, social and environmental. Many assess that Southwark may not be sustainable now, but it may be in the future and evaluated the effectiveness of the strategies in the resource towards achieving this.