

Examiners' Report/  
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2016

Pearson Edexcel GCE  
in Global Development (6GL02) Paper  
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## Paper Introduction

It is pleasing to note the significant improvement in student performance this year. There were some strong scripts in this cohort and a measurable improvement in the ability of candidates to use the Resource Booklet effectively in their answers to question 3. Needless to say some of the old problems persist with too many responses neglecting key words in a question and thus drifting into irrelevance or, more frustratingly, failing to make the point that would help clarify their view; this was especially evident in the extended writing. As many of the following comments indicate knowledge and understanding of basic categories is vital but so too is the ability to see beyond these categories and uncover some of the complexities and inter-relationships that make this such a fascinating area of academic study.

### 1ai

It was surprising that only a minority of students had a clear idea of what this universally used index actually measured. Even more troublesome was a general confusion of what actually constitutes social development which was frequently conflated with economic measures which were generally more secure.

### 1aii

At the bottom end of the mark range there was general confusion over what constitutes a 'humanitarian' disaster and answers wandered off into disasters in general. At the top end the main discriminator was the clarity of focus on 'some groups of people' with only the very best seeing how women, ethnic minorities and the dispossessed might be more vulnerable than others.

### 1b

This question produced a polarised response with a minority having no clear idea about this potential link. These answers tended to concentrate on either the reasons for climate change or offer a few examples of disasters but in neither case making a link. At the other extreme there were convincing accounts of how hurricane activity had increased and how sea level changes might exacerbate the risks - Katrina featured quite often.

2a

This question provided an unexpected challenge for a number of students who immediately offered up the contemporary struggles in Syria and Iraq but seldom with very much detail suggesting that they hadn't actually studied it but simply picked up an overview from media coverage. The best answers were those that used Boko Haram or Ireland and had detail and some data to support their arguments.

2b

This question is very clearly rooted in the specification so it was disappointing that so many students had no clear idea of what constitutes 'population distribution'. As a result, most answers addressed general issues of population change but without any distributional element so 'people leaving Syria' was often offered but no idea of any rural/urban or regional differences were developed. There were exceptions of course and they were sometimes very impressive.

2c

As in other questions the most significant problem was the fuzziness over key terms. The best answers recognised that the term 'economies' could be broken down into jobs, income, production and output. Weaker responses just offered good and bad impacts but didn't clarify what these might be. In weaker responses the links with conflicts were also more likely to be asserted rather than fully explained.

3ai

This was essentially an exercise in interpreting a pre-release resource although perhaps interpreting it from a slightly different perspective than had been done in preparation for the exam. It was thus not altogether surprising that some stumbled and found it hard to identify the different ways in which a country might depend on the river. Those that had an appreciation of how dependency might be a product of subsistence economies but also the growing industrial uses of the river.

3aii

Possible impacts were almost always negative but the key discriminator was the effectiveness with which these impacts were linked with rapidly growing populations which was very sketchy indeed at the lower end of the mark range. Some of the best answers recognised that the rapid growth might not be entirely local to these regions so China's population growth was seen as a powerful element in the exploitation of the Mekong.

### 3b

There were some good answers to this question which allowed the more fleet-footed students the opportunity to draw together some of the points that they had obviously worked on in the classroom. Once again the key differentiation factor was how critically they engaged with the title set which above all required a view about the contrasting opinions which are quite stark. The reliability of the source evidence was touched on by a few who saw the importance of self-interest but most concentrated on describing differences in views rather than examining the reasons behind these differences.

### 3c

As with 3b there were a pleasing number of very good answers to this question. Time constraints, as in previous years, seems to have inhibited some, but for most it was not so much time but poor question deconstruction and limited use of rhetorical argument that proved to be the main inhibitions. It was also evident that only a minority chose to pay much attention to the three elements that candidates were instructed to address in their evaluation. Thus the 'ideology of government' was scarcely mentioned whilst there was real haziness about the meaning of 'sustainable' (development). As elsewhere on this paper the need for students to be coached through these definitions and, most especially, their relative complexity is self-evident. Weaker students often conflate categories such as economic and social simply because they don't know what the clichéd definitions are whilst stronger students know the clichés e.g. sustainable development maintains current needs without compromising the possibility of future generations meeting their needs.

### Summary

The need to work with students on their understanding of command words is an obvious lesson to be drawn from this examination paper in most years. Although certainly not restricted to this paper nor, of course, this specification on a paper such as this one with a pre-released resource booklet forming the basis of a question that carries well over half of the total number of marks available, it does take on an extra layer of significance. Given that all students, in principle at least, have the same information at their disposal albeit at different levels of comprehension, interpretation becomes vital. They need to know what exactly to do with this data and thus whilst having the same material available the direction and selection indicated by the command words becomes especially significant.



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