

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2014

Pearson Edexcel GCE in Global
Development (6GL02)
Paper 1: Global Development
Challenges

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General Comments

In this, the second 'outing' of this paper there was a significant improvement in both students' knowledge of the material and, in general their ability to interpret questions. It was obvious that they had been prepared using last year's papers and their familiarity with the pre-released resource booklet was sometimes very impressive showing signs of research that extended well beyond the material included in that booklet. As is always the case the most successful students took great care to deconstruct questions carefully and to address both the focus of the question and to spot any restrictions in the question that might limit the scope of their answers.

The weakest answers came from students who did not have a solid grasp of the key terms and so although they generally knew something about the topic they did not have the specification vocabulary to go beyond sweeping statements that often had little meaningful content.

Question 1ai

These basic definitions were usually well understood. The best answers often used examples to extend their basic ideas with some using last year's Haiti material to add some detail about both humanitarian aid and crisis management. Some wrote far too much here for the 4 available marks extending into fine detail not only of what constitutes for example, humanitarian aid, but also what isn't humanitarian aid.

Question 1a ii

The focus of this question is pretty clear but the restriction to 'long-term impact' was missed by some who ignored it altogether. There were others who, in their eagerness to address the education and health focus, missed the initial cause of a 'natural' disaster and so offered examples that were interesting and often quite detailed but inappropriate. Good answers, of which there were many, saw that infrastructure issues were often central with mismanagement often slowing the pace of reconstruction, especially in remote regions.

Question 1b

The obvious discriminator in marking this question was the evenness of coverage of the three time periods involved. It wasn't necessary for students to offer the same amount of information on each but it was obviously important that they, at least, included all of them. The weakest and most challenging was the 'after the event' period. As with other questions, it would help students to use the keywords in the question in their answers so increasing the clarity of their responses. In too many cases it wasn't clear when the technology was being used and how it would help.

Question 2a

Emboldening keywords and phrases is intended to draw students' attention to the key focus of the question especially for terms that might be contentious, and although not used in every question, it is an important tool. The intention here was to help students avoid highly generalised responses that simply offered some idea of the horror of war without addressing which human 'right' was being threatened or compromised. The best answers used examples with a very specific focus on freedom from torture, freedom of speech and political dissent.

Some were tempted to stray from description into explanation which cost time and wasn't, of course, rewardable.

Question 2b

Of all the questions on the paper it was this one that produced the most poorly focussed responses. Too many seemed to have no idea what exactly 'the international community' might mean or, assuming that they did know, failed to clarify what it was in their answers. Case study knowledge was also scanty with some answers avoiding mention of any specific conflicts but making a few general points about avoidance of conflict for its own sake. The best answers focussed on the Balkans and UN action.

Question 2c

The last three words of the question, 'of a country', were a clear indication that case-study material would work well here and those that took the hint did very well. Others chose to write generic answers that mentioned no specific country or countries and exacerbated that omission by failing to address 'long-term'. The intention here was to stimulate students to think and then write about the different aspects of development that might be impacted allowing social and political aspects to be addressed as well as economic. Once again those candidates that deconstructed these keywords effectively gained most leverage in digging out examples that helped their answers focus.

Question 3ai

In order to offer reasons for the relationship it is obviously important that the students make it clear that they understand what that relationship actually is. The weaker answers failed to do this effectively whilst the better responses expressed were able to recognise that although it was possible to achieve a reasonably high HDI score without a consequentially high footprint the general relationship was clearly positive. Again students would be well advised to 'spell out' their answers so the strongest went beyond 'because they are richer' to the consequences of that insofar as higher incomes allowed a greater consumption of consumer goods.

Question 3aii

This question was generally well answered with the 'three- legged stool' analogy frequently featuring in students' answers. The booklet helped here because it clearly identified the potentially conflicting elements of environmental and economic development as well as the impact of growing wealth disparities on social cohesion. Using this as their starting point the stronger candidates were able to introduce examples and illustrations of the views of different 'players' in this debate. Once again the strongest answers picked up on the shifting sands of public opinion when environmental and economic issues came into conflict using Figure 2 thoughtfully.

Question 3b

The theme of different interest groups was continued into this question and most candidates explicitly addressed the central theme of the booklet that no single policy could satisfy the needs of all of the people and complex choices have to be made. In these longer answers students need to pay attention to the construction of their responses and, in this case, the need to actively compare. Comparison needs comparative language and not simple statements which leave

it to the reader to sort out the comparisons for themselves. The stronger answers managed to extract material from the Resource Booklet and add their own distinctive edge with signs of research evident.

Question 3c

Writing essays needs practice and time. Given that the final question on this paper is quite strongly signalled in the Resource Booklet it is important that students are prepared not only in the various threads of the debate, for it is always a debate, but also the critical skills of constructing an argument on paper. It is a learnable skill but it does need to be learnt. The best answers took a view of the inevitability of environmental damage if Ecuador is to continue economic and social progress. Students need to be empowered to take on a title and, in this case, the strongest responses contested the inevitability of the damage and suggested ways in which it could be avoided. Some, albeit a very small number, took on the notion of progress and how that might be evaluated. There were signs of exam fatigue in some answers and it is worth reminding students that there is no compulsion to answer the questions as they appear on the paper so answering question 3 first might have helped some with their time management and perhaps, increased their marks.

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