

Examiners' Report
January 2012

GCSE Geography 5GA1F 01

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Introduction

With just over 1300 entries, the January entry is less predictable and rather more polarised than its much larger summer equivalent. With a significant number of students re-sitting and some candidates entering early, levels of maturity vary widely. It isn't surprising, therefore, that the standard deviation is quite high at 7.6 around a mean of 26 reflecting a fair sprinkling of very good students and some who clearly were not at all prepared for this paper.

Mapwork skills, which are central to this paper, proved to be patchy and the attempt to help students, by providing some context and scaffolding to help them understand a question, confused some. Sadly this was true of the very first question on the paper. Elsewhere the picture was also variable – a modal mark of 3 out of 4 on 1 (d) suggests that sketching skills are improving whilst the 50% of candidates who failed to get the second mark for 2 (a) (i) might suggest that a little more time could be spent on the less interpretive skill of completing diagrams. GIS is not well understood by lower achieving candidates.

On the Challenges for the Planet section the most obvious obstacle to better performance was not so much knowledge but how to use that knowledge effectively. The importance of extending answers to add to a basic point is critical and the statistics show far too many failing to do this. Stronger students do it by developing examples or adding detail. Once again it matters a great deal that students understand the key terms on the specification. It is certainly worthwhile spending a little time ensuring that these are understood and most importantly of all, the idea of sustainability and the challenges of defining this in a meaningful way are addressed in the classroom.

Question 1 (b)(i)

Unlike the higher paper this question proved a challenge for many despite the help provided by the word box. Many struggled with both of the river related elements although doing better on land use. For each element only about half of the candidates found the correct option.

Question 1 (c)(ii)

With a mean mark of 1.7/4 and a modal mark of 2 this question obviously posed some challenges to students in finding the correct sequence.

Question 1 (d)

This question was identical to the higher paper question and posed real challenges. The modal mark was 0 with nearly 30% failing to score at all; many of these didn't even attempt it. It is worth remembering that this type of skill is clearly specified and thus needs to be practised. However the mean was 16/4 which is lower than on the higher paper but not greatly so, suggesting that a fair number could complete this with some success. As with the Higher paper many confused the PH in Torcross with the PC in Slapton Sands.

(d) Look at the OS map extract and Figure 1b (photograph) of Slapton Ley in the Resource Booklet.

Photograph 1b was taken in grid square 8241.

Figure 1c is an incomplete sketch of the photograph.

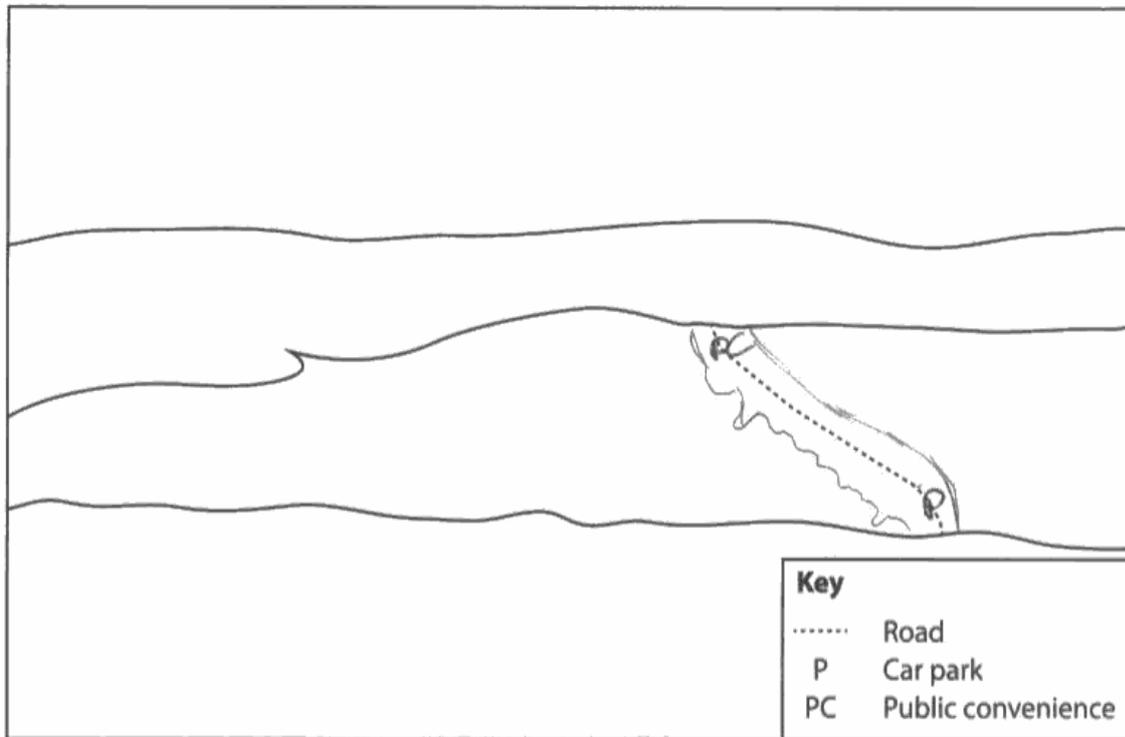


Figure 1c

Complete the sketch by adding the following features:

(4)

- the outline of Slapton Ley
- the bar (beach).

Using the key provided, label the following features in the correct positions on the sketch:

- the car park at Torcross
- the public convenience at Slapton Sands.



Question 2 (a)(i)

As with other cartographical tasks some candidates simply chose not to offer anything here. Those who did, frequently struggled much more with Frogmore and Sherford taking a distinctly impressionist approach to map drawing accuracy. In some cases this presumably reflected inadequate equipment. Certainly the lack of a ruler was frequently evident. Students needed to produce a result that was close enough to the key to be readable and not easily confused with other categories or, as in some cases, involving the invention of wholly new categories.

2 (a) Look at Figure 2.

It shows the population densities of some parishes in South Devon.

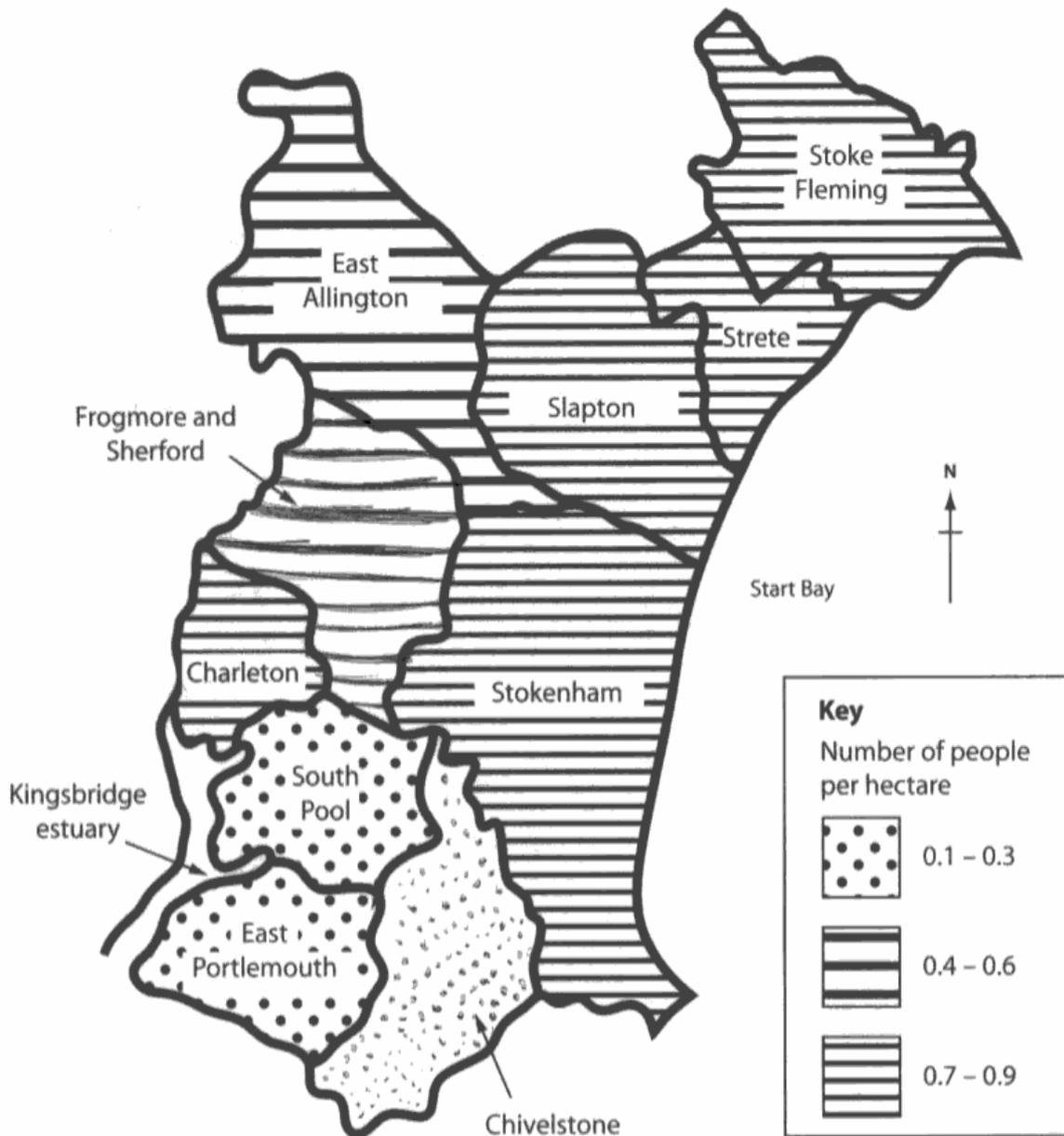


Figure 2

(i) Complete Figure 2.

Use the data in the table below.

Parish	Population density (number of people per hectare)
Frogmore and Sherford	0.4
Chivelstone	0.2



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Dots are rather small but acceptable and Frogmore and Sherford is OK too, therefore 2 marks.

Question 2 (a)(ii)

This question proved challenging to weaker students. Describing patterns is a familiar task for geographers and is a learnable skill. The most obvious weakness for too many was an inclination just to list parishes in some detail with the appropriate population density quoted (usually accurately). Of course this does not address pattern. Those who chose to use compass points almost always spotted lower densities in the south and higher densities in the east and thus, with appropriate supportive data, scored at least 3 out of 4 – but many just stuck to one element and added some data; the modal mark was 2/4 achieved by 40% of students. Coverage of the north-west corner was less even (much as the distribution!) Right across the ability range too many failed to resist the urge to offer explanations which often involved proximity to the sea.

(ii) Describe the pattern of population density shown on Figure 2.

Use population density data in your answer.

(4)

The pattern of population is ~~un~~^{un}evenly spread, the highest population is in the north and ~~was~~ eastern area ^{of 0.7-0.9 number of people per hectare} whereas the lowest is in the south and western area of 0.1-0.3 number of people per hectare. This may be due to some of the parishes in South Devon such as Stokenham and Slapton are larger than others such as South pool and East Portlemouth.



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Examiner Comments

Mark for uneven (1) mark for north and east (1) mark for south (1) and one for the data (1) so 4 marks

Question 2 (b)(i)

The question contained information about GIS in that it was inferred that they involved mapping. The expectation was that students would recognise that they were electronic either by directly making reference to this or naming a well-known GIS. Many chose not to do this and simply referred to the sort of information that could be read off a GIS which in many cases was exactly the same list as if the question has asked them to identify the information that could be read off a map.

(b) Geographical Information Systems (GIS) could be used to display the population data in Figure 2.

(i) What are Geographical Information Systems (GIS)?

(2)

Where you can put all your information into the system and it saves it all - like Google Maps, you can type any address in the world and it should come up with what your looking for giving you a ~~new~~ birdseye or ternal view.



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Examiner Comments

Gets the 'electronic' mark through Google (1) but nothing extra excepting one use that is not distinctive... so 1 mark

Question 2 (b)(ii)

The key here was to provide a little detail about how GIS had been used by the student and not how it was *generally* applied. Many managed a mark by suggesting it was useful for route finding but no added detail was provided.

(ii) GIS is used by web mapping sites on the internet.

Describe **one** way that you have used GIS.

(2)

One way I have used GIS is by how many cars enter, ~~to~~ any city at a time, like colours. But also when they come out of the city



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Examiner Comments

This response is awarded 1 mark for the idea of counting cars but cannot gain the second mark as the point is not developed.

Question 3 (a)(v)

3 (a) (v) the only element that caused any problems was northern/western

Question 3 (b)

This question was interpreted in three ways. For some it was clearly a question about global responses and many had an excellent knowledge of the history of climate change from Kyoto onwards. Others took it to be a question about how we as individuals could respond and thus went down the route of exploring green consumerism and related topics. Yet another group saw the response in a systemic sense, describing the problems of coral reefs or other ecosystems in adjusting, or more accurately not adjusting, to rising temperatures. This wide range of possibilities led to high scoring with many candidates achieving a high score with a mean mark of 1.5 for the C grade candidates and a modal mark of 2/3.

(b) Describe **one** response to climate change on a global scale.

(3)

People have started to walk more places and shares lifts - & use schemes such as park & ride. Meaning less fuel is burnt meaning not as much CO² is being put into our atmosphere



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Examiner Comments

Again the personal approach - two responses are offered but both work here - walking more often (1) use cars less (1) reduce emissions (1) so 3 marks

Question 4 (a)(ii)

The key to success on this question was to take the information offered in the resource and make necessary links between the type of extraction described and the impact on people and the environment – this involved adding something about the process involved to get an 'explanation' as required. Most students across the ability range found it relatively easy to do this although some chose poorly adding little or nothing. The mean mark was just over 1.2/2 with insufficient supporting detail the usual reason for failure to gain the second mark.

- (ii) Outline **one** effect of resource extraction on the environment in tropical rainforest areas.

Use evidence from Figure 4 in your answer.

(2)

logging has opened up the forest. Animals are suffering from this as their natural habitats are being destroyed and hunted such as gorillas and elephants. Local people work in the sawmills they are not given protection therefore even they are suffering. Logging, logging, oil extraction and logging in Ecuador are extremely dangerous as the toxic waste, such as Mercury pollutes the air and the water, making everyone suffer. Animals



ResultsPlus

Examiner Comments

Two of these are about impacts on people so they cannot be credited. However the gorilla/elephant material is fine with a little extension about destruction of natural habitats.

Question 4 (a)(iii)

This question, aimed at the C grade student, discriminated well. The keyword and focus is obviously manage(ment) and too many of the weaker answers simply left this out, writing in very general terms about schemes to preserve the rainforest. Some of these also omitted much reference to resource extraction. Successful candidates often offered two, well learnt case-studies but, too often, the detail of specific locations was weak.

(iii) Outline how resource extraction from tropical rainforest areas is being managed.

Use examples in your answer.

(4)

Many countries are now demanding oil companies to pay up grants for clean ups. In Ecuador, a company called Texaco had to pay \$40 million up - grant to ~~Eq~~ Ecuador for cleaning up after. Also now there are local villagers being taught about their land. NGO's are teaching local people ethnomapping and this is telling the ~~people~~ people what their land is really worth.



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Examiner Comments

Government action (1) background to problem (1) what they are doing - getting them to clean up(1) + further detail - location and development (1) so 4 marks

Question 4 (b)

There is a clearly written section of the specification that is devoted to how companies change their organisational structures and production processes to reduce waste in their own activities ; in other words in their work places. Students have also studied the ways in which companies strived to help sustainability in a more general sense. The case studies candidates had at their disposal served well here – Asda, M and S, Interface, Nokia. The smartest candidates showed good awareness in making some of their case study material fit the title whilst others didn't trouble to do so. There were many level 3 responses and some of these showed a good understanding of sustainability. Others more or less ignored the word, making no attempt to point out how the various processes actually helped achieve sustainability.

1 What can you learn from Sources A and B about changes in the communication of medical knowledge?

Explain your answer, using these sources.

Rating:

(4)

From Source A, it is ~~stated~~ stated that medical knowledge was summed up in written form inside a book, which many doctors and physicians can use. However because there was ~~not~~ ~~electronic~~ the technology wasn't as advanced in 1543 than in ~~to~~ today, there are many flaws with this. Unlike Source A, in Source B information can be quickly accessed via the internet (which almost everyone has access to), the data on the website can be edited constantly for any change in medical knowledge (which a book would need to be re-written, taking vast amounts of time), and it can give advice for individuals to see doctors, or to take action on their illness. As well, many people could not read in 1543, meaning only trained doctors can use the book, however in modern times almost everyone can read, so anyone could access and understand the data.

(Total for Question 1 = 4 marks)



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Examiner Comments

One idea with some detail offered but the candidate also adds a link to sustainability in terms of reduction in emissions so just into level 2, 3 marks.

Paper Summary

In order to improve performance candidates should:

- Practise completing diagrams accurately and neatly, using a ruler and following the key where necessary.
- Practise extending their answers when asked to describe or explain by adding detail or developing their examples.
- Learn, understand and be able to define key terminology contained in the specification.

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