

Examiners' Report  
June 2015

GCSE Geography A 5GA1H 01

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## Introduction

As in previous series, this was a paper which demonstrated a big divide in the ability range of candidates. Excellent case-study knowledge (which was focused on the questions set) saw generally high marks for many in the last section of the paper, but higher order assessments were almost entirely absent in Question 5(b). Section A once again revealed patchy skills with OS map-skills especially weak. Competency in understanding the relevance of GIS and its application to how it could provide additional data / information were also notably absent from many responses (Question 2(b)). Many candidates also appeared unprepared for Question 3 which required fieldwork and secondary skills.

Again, as in previous series, the greatest discriminator was often a lack of clarity about what to do with command words. There were also problems of scale and context all too apparent when looking at the map extract.

Once again, there were a few candidates who looked as if they may have run out of time since there were some blank responses on occasion towards the end of the exam. In this year's exam, Question 5(b) has a very high tariff at 9+4 marks so it must be attempted if at all possible. Please remember to advise candidates that they really should only need to use the answer-space provided, and not to over-write.

SPaG is now well established in this paper. Please remember that the 4 SPaG marks are based both on the technical quality of written communication, e.g. sentence structure, full-stops, capitals as well as the complexity of writing and the use of technical geographical language and / or complex terms. A candidate who scores a zero response for the answer, i.e. incorrect, would normally also be given zero for the SPaG since there is a requirement to write in the 'context of the demands of the question'.

Compass skills are the 'bread and butter' of this part of the exam, yet even at this tier there were a number of candidates who were unable to link the map to the ground evidence from the photograph. This is clearly a skill that needs continual practice from Year 7 upwards.

This report will provide exemplification of candidates' work, together with tips and/or comments, for a selection of questions. The exemplification will come mainly from questions which required more complex responses from candidates.

## Question 1 (c)

This was generally a well answered question, although some candidates misread it and wrote about human features as opposed to physical features (no credit directly). To gain the last mark a majority of candidates failed to give evidence from the map which could have been a particular point or grid reference for example.

This answer was awarded all 4 marks.

(c) Study the OS map extract.

Describe the physical features of the north Norfolk area.

Use evidence from the OS map extract.

(4)

to the north west of the north norfolk area there are many fresh water marshes (e.g. OS44). There is also a river going from the north west to the south, meandering around little Thornage, called the River Gaven (0441). There are many woodland areas / national parks in the centre and to the east, near Baconsthorpe<sup>orpe</sup> and Hempstead there are hill dominated areas and are high up (1137)



**ResultsPlus**

**Examiner Comments**

Although there is some reference to the built environment, this response has enough detail and specific map references to get the maximum marks.



**ResultsPlus**

**Examiner Tip**

With questions such as these, map evidence is places, features, or 4 or 6 figure grid references.

(c) Study the OS map extract.

Describe the physical features of the north Norfolk area.

Use evidence from the OS map extract.



(4)

In the OS Map of Norfolk we can see there is a small cliff towards the NNE of the map in grid square (18,43). There are also <sup>of Snettisham</sup> different types of beach, towards the west a most of the beaches are shingle whereas towards the east side they are sand. Also <sup>some</sup> ~~most~~ of the land is taken up by woodland, both coniferous and

(Total for Question 1 = 9 marks)

non-coniferous for example in grid square (07,40), there is also a river system that creates a marsh, the river Glaven.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Comments

This is another example of an answer getting maximum marks with a good range of identifiable and located physical features.

## Question 2 (a)

Examiners reported that a majority of candidates scored only 1 mark in this question. Very many candidates failed to use the map to give evidence to gain the second mark.

This answer was awarded 2 marks.

2 (a) Study Figure 2a in the Resource Booklet and the OS map extract.

Use evidence from the OS map extract to suggest **one** reason why this location may be suitable for a new wind turbine.

(2)

It is high above sea level, in fact 80-90 metres meaning it will have strong winds and it will disturb less people ~~as~~ will be sparsely populated.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Comments

This response gets credit for the link between high ground and strong winds, plus they use map evidence (80-90m). Note there is no credit for the second idea about sparsely populated.

## Question 2 (b) (ii)

Most candidates spotted that only tourists were asked, although none realised why only tourists were asked. Two explanations were needed for the 4 marks available.

This example gained full marks.

(ii) Explain the limitations of using the survey data in Figure 2b to support the building of the planned wind turbine at Bodham Hill.

(4)

They were tourists, so may not have much relevant knowledge of the area, or wind turbines. Even if they did, ~~the~~ the outcome wouldn't affect them, so their opinions aren't very useful. The categories are quite vague, so you can't base a decision on someone saying it will have 'a very positive effect' without explanation. It is also a 'snapshot' method, only collecting views from people there on that one day.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Comments

The two clear, developed explanations relevant to the data in Figure 2b allow this candidate to be rewarded with maximum marks.

## Question 2 (c)

There is considerable evidence that candidates still do not understand GIS, clearly this is an area that requires more practice. However, there were a number of responses which not only told Examiners how layering worked, but used it as the basis of clear explanations. Some centres/candidates are getting this important and significant 21<sup>st</sup> century skill right.

This response scored all 3 marks.

(c) Explain how Geographical Information Systems (GIS) might be used to find out more information about an area such as Bodham Hill.

hill but it was  
done in  
Scottish highland  
(3) so differ  
plans.

GIS is a base layer map that has different types of information added on. Information such as the land use could be added to see for example if the area is used for farming or buildings and thus predict the damage it can cause or if the buildings can be removed. Moreover GIS can be used to see the land prices to see if it is an area of high demand or if the population could be added to guess the number of services. The population ages could also be added.

(Total for Question 2 = 10 marks) ve added



**ResultsPlus**

**Examiner Comments**

It is clear that this candidate understands the opportunities that GIS offers in terms of extra layers, e.g. land prices and geo-demographic data.



**ResultsPlus**

**Examiner Tip**

GIS is a tool that can be used to explore all the spatial aspects of geography throughout the course.

### Question 3

This question demonstrated very effective discrimination. Candidates were asked to think geographically and in many respects would have been expected to transfer their experiences from controlled assessment to this part of the test.

Candidates found it difficult to devise a simple clear question for an enquiry, which implies that perhaps they do not have enough practice at it.

They also often described the content of the information they needed rather than the source. A number were also unable to distinguish between primary and secondary data, and those that could often failed to go into detail on the secondary and primary data collection.

This example scored all 6 marks.

\*3 Study Figure 3 in the Resource Booklet and the OS map extract.

A group of GCSE students carried out their Controlled Assessment in north Norfolk.

For **one** of the topics shown on Figure 3:

State a suitable geographical **question** or **hypothesis** for a geographical enquiry.

How are river processes affecting the rates of flooding in North Norfolk?

Describe the primary and secondary information you would need to collect to investigate your question or hypothesis.

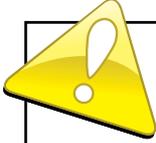
The water speed of the river Glaven can be <sup>measured,</sup> ~~to work out if~~ and the depth of the river can also be measured. The water volume of a cross section of the river can be calculated. Once this primary data is collected, the data can be compared to historical maps of river depth and speed to look for patterns and changes. For more secondary data, flood records can be checked to look for recent and historical floods. This could be compared with interviews from locals about recent floods and river observation. Geology Maps can be used to check for impermeable rock types in the area that would favour flooding.



**ResultsPlus**

**Examiner Comments**

This candidate gives some good details of both primary and secondary fieldwork / data, all of which are relevant within the context of the question they have set themselves.



**ResultsPlus**

**Examiner Tip**

What a good idea to transfer experience of your own fieldwork to this question!

This is another example of an answer that was awarded all 6 marks.

\*3 Study Figure 3 in the Resource Booklet and the OS map extract.

A group of GCSE students carried out their Controlled Assessment in north Norfolk.

For **one** of the topics shown on Figure 3:

State a suitable geographical **question** or **hypothesis** for a geographical enquiry.

How is urban land use changing in north Norfolk?

Describe the primary and secondary information you would need to collect to investigate your question or hypothesis.

In this investigation, the students would need to collect primary information in the field on the current land use in urban areas around north Norfolk. They would also need to use secondary information including maps and photographs to establish previous land use so that they could be compared to the present. The students would need to collect information and statistics <sup>from</sup> of the area; ~~for example~~ for example: if the land is agricultural, residential, <sup>recreational</sup> or industrial. Research could then be done using the internet <sup>or</sup> GIS to find future uses and past <sup>of the land</sup> uses, over a period of <sup>time (for example, 50 years)</sup> 50 years to show how it has and is going to change. This data would need to be collected over a wide area to make it reliable and questionnaires could be completed by locals and business owners regarding <sup>what</sup> ~~how~~ they remember the land use of the area to be and their knowledge of ~~it~~ how it may change in the future.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Comments

This Level 3 response shows a balance of depth and detail.



the flow off water around the world and direct the gulf stream's current direction. This would dramatically change the temperature in western countries, as their temperature will drop to Arctic levels. Also, retreating glaciers melt which contributes to rising sea levels in the world. As a result low lying cities would flood like London and New York if levels get too high.



**ResultsPlus**

**Examiner Comments**

A series of linked ideas and suggestions lead to a successful outcome for this candidate with clear detail and focus on the negative impacts for people.



**ResultsPlus**

**Examiner Tip**

The 'suggest' command should indicate to candidates to go beyond a simple description and towards an explanation. Knowledge and understanding from outside of the resource will often be required to come up with some sensible ideas.

## Question 4 (b) (ii)

Some good answers were evident, but a large number of candidates wrote too much, not recognising that this 3 mark question could be answered with brevity and precision.

It is worth reassuring centres and candidates at this point that it is fine to use examples that are not in textbooks and instead to use more up-to-date and likely, more relevant, local examples. In fact, Examiners would regard this as better practice than relying on the ones that are provided in many of the textbooks (there were a lot of 'Live Simply').

3 marks were awarded for this response.

(ii) Describe **one** global response to climate change.

(3)

International meetings are a response to climate change. In 1988, the UN set up the Intergovernmental panel on climate change and said that the earth temperature had risen by 0.5°C in the last 100 years. In 1992, at the Rio Earth summit, the United Nations Framework Convention on climate change was signed by 56 nations setting voluntary targets on the reduction of climate change. At the Kyoto protocol in 1997, those targets were replaced by legally binding controls on climate change which 178 countries signed. The treaty which came into force in 2005.

(Total for Question 4 = 13 marks)



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Comments

There is clearly good detail here, but this is really much more than is needed to secure the 3 marks available.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Tip

Candidates should be thinking more carefully about the relationship between what they write and the number of marks available. Writing too much, or too little are both problematic. In this, a 'describe' question, simple and short factual statements will gain credit.

This example, on the other hand, gained no credit.

(ii) Describe **one** global response to climate change.

(3)

Crop yields are decreasing so less  
crops are harvested so that leads to  
higher price of food so people are left  
starving. More countries are producing  
their own food and crops suited to  
their environment



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Comments

In this instance the candidate has achieved no marks as this is not a global response.

## Question 5 (a)

Good use of data, and an understanding of specialist terms such as 'rate' (or trend, pattern, distribution, anomaly etc) generated successful responses to this question.

3 marks were awarded for this response.

5 (a) Study Figure 5 in the Resource Booklet.

Describe the changes in the **rate** of deforestation between 2004 and 2012.

Use data to support your answer.

(3)

~~Between~~ There has been a decrease of deforestation from 27.8 to 4.7 from the years 2004 to 2012. The most dramatic decrease was between 2004 and 2005 from 27.8 to 19.0 and from then to 2012 there has been a steady decrease. ~~The year 2008~~ The 2008 results could possibly be an anomaly due to it saying that deforestation has gone up which does not go along with the trend.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Comments

A good use of the resource generated a clear response. Full marks were awarded.

## Question 5 (b)

A very mixed bag of responses were provided in this part of the exam. Some were very good, others were very poor. Some interesting exemplification was used e.g. Timberland, but some of the comments about Asda and Nokia now feel pretty dated and could do with a refresh.

Most candidates failed to get anywhere near an evaluation or to use evaluative language which was the instruction in the question command. Instead there was a reliance on descriptions, most of which were actions and only weakly linked to policies.

This is an example of a Level 3 response.

\*(b) Using examples, examine the policies used by large organisations in an attempt to make themselves more sustainable.

(9)

Interface Inc. is the largest carpet manufacturer in the USA and is seen as a sustainable organisation. They have redesigned many products and processes in order for them to ~~be~~ be more environmentally friendly. These processes include removing any toxic waste and preventing it from being released into the environment. Also, the company uses renewable energy, such as solar and wind energy, to power its factories and offices. Another way the company has tried to improve its sustainability is by using efficient transport to transport ~~to~~ goods around the country. Another organisation that has made itself more sustainable is Walmart. The company used to have a rubbish collection 4 times a week to collect its old plastic packaging. After having a new baler installed the rubbish is compressed to 10% of its original size and is only collected once a week. This reduces emissions released by transporting the rubbish. The packaging is also recycled into bin liners which saves raw materials.

(Total for spelling, punctuation and grammar = 4 marks)

(Total for Question 5 = 16 marks)



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Comments

This response has some good detail, but there are simply not enough evaluative comments to be able to access the top of the band.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Tip

Candidates need to really think carefully about the demands of the question and what is required.

This is another example of a Level 3 response.

Google - 9,200 solar panels electric cars ~~and~~ interface Inc. more windows + vents.

\* (b) Using examples, examine the policies used by large organisations in an attempt to make themselves more sustainable. (9)

Firstly, google are trying to be more sustainable by placing 9,200 solar pannels in their headwaters in California. This is sustainable as it means that less fossil fuels have to be burned, however this would have cost a large amount of money so may not be economically sustainable. Using less fossil fuels means less climate change and also more fuel for future generations. Also google are encouraging their employees to cycle to work by giving them money that they ~~use~~ then give to a charity of their choice. This is sustainable socially as it will help make the employees healthier and also ~~help~~ relieve stress through exercise. This is also environmentally sustainable as it means less vehicles are used which require fossil fuels and produce <sup>less</sup> pollution. Lastly, Interface Inc. (a large carpet company) are trying to be more sustainable by reducing their energy usage. They are doing this by putting in more windows and vents <sup>(features)</sup> so less light bulbs have to be used and less air conditioning/heating.

This is sustainable as it reduces energy usage. Overall companies are trying hard to be sustainable and generally, they are succeeding.

(Total for spelling, punctuation and grammar = 4 marks)

(Total for Question 5 = 16 marks)



**ResultsPlus**

**Examiner Comments**

Here there is another very solid attempt at policies, but once again more evaluative or at least comparative comments would be expected for additional marks.

This answer was awarded top Level 3 marks.

\*(b) Using examples, examine the policies used by large organisations in an attempt to make themselves more sustainable.

(9)

ASDA ~~Walmart~~ in Didcot, Oxfordshire used to chuck away their ~~can~~ polythene wrapping that they got from their products. They had to pay ~~on~~ to ~~of~~ dispose of this waste which was costing them money. However a company called Mil-tek provided a baler machine to Asda. The baler was used to shrink the packaging to 10% of its original size; which produced less waste. ~~This was~~ They then recycled this waste ~~by~~ giving it to companies who needed it and they were benefiting because instead of paying to dispose the waste; they were actually getting paid for giving the waste to the companies. This is good for ~~the environment~~ because less waste goes to landfill <sup>sites</sup>.

Nokia which is a mobile company, started to encourage people to recycle their old and unused phones <sup>by having information on their website.</sup> This is because a 100% of the phones can be <sup>converted</sup> ~~used to make them~~ into new products such as road bends or trumpets etc. This is sustainable because less phones would have to

go to landfill sites and less harmful chemicals which  
are released from phones are not released into the  
atmosphere.

(Total for spelling, punctuation and grammar = 4 marks)

(Total for Question 5 = 16 marks)



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**Examiner Comments**

This response is much better - some evaluative comments (although they could be stronger); top of Level 3.

## Paper Summary

Once again, the paper this series revealed some inconsistencies in candidates' performance.

- There were some excellent answers linking together knowledge and understanding through case study material, e.g. slightly longer answers in Question 4 and Question 5.
- This was in marked contrast to the performance on the skills elements of Question 1 and Question 2. Map skills were sometimes quite poor even from candidates who did well later on in the paper.
- A particular aspect of this was the inability of some candidates to grasp the idea of scale – this lack of skill was exposed in Question 1(b), for instance.
- A number of candidates still seem to struggle with ways of displaying and interpreting data. Question 2(b)(i) was a particular example of this problematic understanding.
- GIS remains a mystery for a number of candidates, and possibly some centres. Weaknesses in this area manifest themselves in the test in a number of areas.
- As previously suggested in other series, it is probably a good idea for centres to try and integrate these map skills into general teaching and learning of topics rather than seeing them as a stand-alone unit of work.

## **Grade Boundaries**

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