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Examiners' Report January 2011

GCSE Geography 5GB1F 01

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January 2011

Publications Code UG026373

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Introduction

This report covers responses from the Foundation tier paper of GCSE Geography Specification B. The unit one paper is one hour long. The paper comprises of four compulsory sections and two optional units. Each section starts with a resource based activity, followed by one or two extending questions. The question paper has been designed to be progressively more difficult.

The aim of the unit / paper is to provide candidates with a broad and varied understanding of the natural environment. Question paper completion will require candidates to apply a range of skills. Candidates will need to be able to interpret and read maps, diagrams and charts.

Candidates have the choice of answering either sections 5 or 6, 7 or 8. Similar to the June paper, the most popular topics were 'Coastal Change and Conflict' and 'Extreme Climates'. The breakdown in both cases was approximately one third, two thirds.

Students completing the 'Extreme Climate' topic are given the choice of focusing on either a hot arid or arctic region. Hot arid locations, in particular Australia, proved most popular. However, all locations seemed to result in the same score distribution.

Question 1(b)

Although the focus of this question was ‘immediate’ responses, a considerable number of candidates either suggested long term actions (such as improving construction standards) or highlighted activities that would have been carried out prior to the quake (e.g. practising drills in schools so everyone knows what to do). Many students would benefit from the distinction between planning / preparation and responses being made more clear.

(b) State **two** immediate responses in managing tectonic hazards (eg earthquake or volcanic eruption).

(2)

- 1 Evacuation evacuating the area
- 2 Bringing in trained people to help any people injured. - first aiders shelters.



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Examiner Comments

A good answer. Two immediate responses clearly identified.

Question 1(c)

Overall, this question was answered reasonably well by most candidates. Many students highlighted the different levels of development and gave an extending statement about the additional 'services' that MEDCs can provide. Some candidates threw away points by either going off focus (e.g. giving unrelated knowledge on the richter scale) or listing many reasons instead of providing more extended information on two. Students you highlighted differences in magnitude or population density rarely provided extending statements worthy of the extra marks.

Figure 1b - Number of deaths in recent earthquakes

Suggest **two** reasons why the number of deaths varies between earthquakes.

(4)

1 One country could be prepared for earthquakes. Emergencies can be trained appropriately. The other may not be prepared.

2 One could be a MEDC meaning they have more money to deal with the disaster, more money to buy medical equipment. The other could be a LEDC and not be able to afford medical supplies etc.

(Total for Question 1 = 8 marks)



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Examiner Comments

A solid response - identifies two reasons and explains their importance.

Figure 1b – Number of deaths in recent earthquakes

Suggest **two** reasons why the number of deaths varies between earthquakes.

(4)

1 The earthquakes are stronger for some countries as are along the planets fault line.

2 The population is bigger in some countries than others.



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Examiner Comments

Candidate identifies two reasons but provide no extending statements.



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Examiner Tip

Pay close attention to the amount of points a question is worth. This task carried 4 marks but only asked for two reasons, therefore we can deduce an extended statement is needed.

Question 2(a)

This question was answered well by most candidates. Some students interpreted impacts from the resource provided, others used their personal knowledge and referred to more recent colder periods. A small number of candidates lost marks by concentrating on the impacts of warming temperatures at the end of a cold period.

Figure 2 – Painting of the Little Ice Age (18th century)

(a) State **two** impacts of colder periods, such as the Little Ice Age.

(2)

- 1 Farming. Crops would fail due to extreme cold conditions and lack of water.
- 2 More deaths due to hypothermia. However tourism would increase due to ski slopes being formed.



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Examiner Comments

An excellent answer. Two impacts are clearly identified, crop failure and deaths from hypothermia.



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Examiner Tip

Some students lost marks on this response by being overly simplistic. A common answer was 'people died', by itself this statement wasn't enough to be credited. People died before and after the cold period as well! Candidate responses needed to identify how the colder period led to an increased death rate.

Question 2(b)(i)

The vast majority of candidates got this activity correct.

Question 2(b)(ii)

The vast majority of candidates got this activity correct.

Question 2(c)

Most candidates scored at least half marks on this question. The most common route to success highlighted travel / car use and then linked this to increased carbon dioxide emissions. A number of candidates provided repetitive statements, with both activities identified over-lapping.

(c) Describe how **two** human activities can contribute to climate change.

(4)

1 when we burn fossil fuels
like oil or coal it ~~can~~ it
lets out carbon dioxide which causes
global warming
2 we also cut down trees
that also causes global warming
because these trees take in
carbon dioxide



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Examiner Comments

A full mark response. Candidate identified two activities and clearly describes their link with greenhouse gas concentrations.

(c) Describe how **two** human activities can contribute to climate change.

(4)

1 ~~the amount of~~ driving cars has contributed to climate change because it has increased ~~cars~~ emissions.

2 factories pump out alot of emissions therefore contributing to climate change



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Examiner Comments

Identifies cars and factories but 'emissions' is far too basic for additional marks.



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Examiner Tip

Try to be specific wherever possible. Although this candidate identified two activities they failed to gain the extension marks as the term 'emissions' is too simplistic. Also look for opportunities to include subject specific terminology in your answers.

Question 3(a)(i)

Most candidates accurately plotted September's rainfall. A small number missed the question out.

Question 3(b)

Although a wide range of human activities were used to answer this question, deforestation was by far the most popular focus. Some candidates lost marks by confusing biosphere degradation with more general climate change.

(b) Outline how **one** human activity has damaged the biosphere.

(2)

Deforestation has damaged the biosphere because trees and forests have been cut down and destroyed.



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Examiner Comments

Candidate only recieved one mark as the statements are repetitive with no new information being added.

Question 3(c)

Although most candidates were able to identify at least one conservation strategy, few included the level of detail required to gain the extra extension mark. Candidates needed to describe how their chosen technique actually protected the biosphere for full marks. e.g. national parks protect the biosphere by banning harmful activities, such as mining. Selective logging conserve the biosphere because a canopy and tree roots remain, stopping soil erosion. As with item 3b, a large number of candidates lost marks by making generalised climate change related statements. Such answered only scored marks when a biosphere link was clearly made.

(c) Describe **two** ways in which people are trying to conserve the biosphere.

(4)

1 National parks - its a legal status in which protects the habitats and wildlife.

2 Promoting eco-tourism - it brings in money to the local people and towns, and is sustainable.



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Examiner Comments

A concise but accurate answer. Candidate identified two activities (establishing national parks and promoting eco-tourism) and describes their green credentials.



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Examiner Tip

The number of lines given for an answer should help you to plan your response. Clearly, the more lines that are provided, the more in-depth your answer should be. However, as this example proves, when you 'hit the nail on the head' you can often be left with spare space.

Question 4(a)(i)

Candidates clearly found the compound line chart more difficult to read than the climate graph resource used in question 3.

Question 4(a)(ii)

Although the majority of candidate correctly answered this question, a significant minority selected 'domestic'. Clearly this indicates a lack of understanding of the compound line chart technique.

Question 4(b)

Although the question asked for an impact of **unreliable** water supply, many candidates incorrectly interpreted the focus as **water quality**. Where students correctly grasped the demands of the question, most were able to produce clear and accurate answers. The most common route to success was the linking of unreliable water supply to possible crop failure and rising food prices or potential famine.

(b) Outline **one** impact of unreliable water supply on people.

(2)

High Risks of dehydration. If water stops for
long period of time then there may be no
other water source nearby causing mass dehydration.



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Examiner Comments

This candidate made a good start... they identify unreliable water supply as a potential cause of illness and uses specific terminology. However, the answer fails to score maximum marks as the second statement basically repeats the original comment.

Question 4(c)

As the command word is describe, examiners were looking for extending statements, rather than long lists of activities. Candidates needed to identify two human activities (e.g. factories and farming) and describe how their chosen activities could lead to a reduction in water quality (e.g. chemicals released from factories may be toxic making the river poisonous water). Only a small number of candidates scored strongly on this question. Although most students could identify at least one source of pollution, few could describe its impact. Most students made comments which were far too basic, such as 'making the river dirty'. As with the previous question, there was considerable confusion between the terms 'quality' and 'reliability' with a number of candidates highlighting droughts.

Question 5(a)

A surprisingly large number of candidates failed to score on this question. Answer varied from a volcano to a glacier! A significant number of students identified a process rather than a landform.

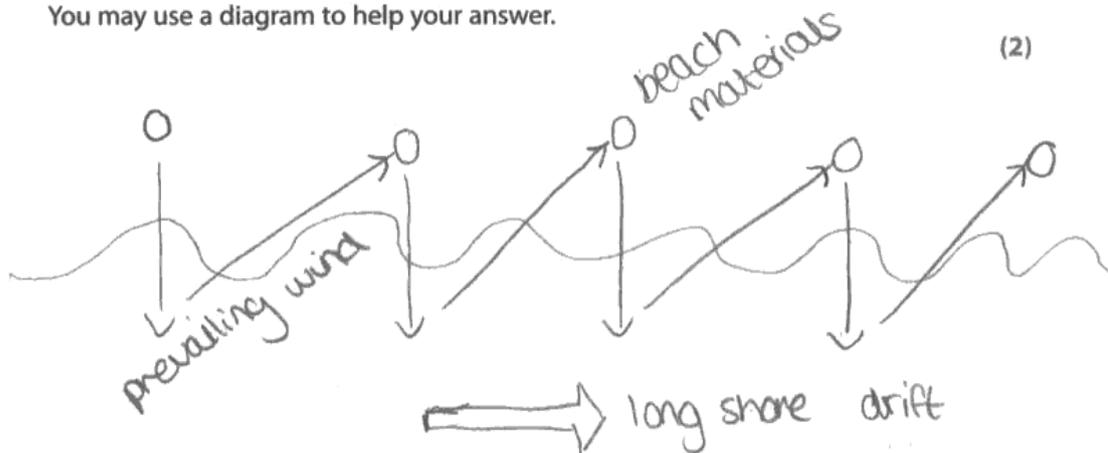
Question 5(b)

The majority of candidates gained both marks on this question. The most common route to success involved a diagram that illustrated the zig-zaggy nature of longshore drift, with a supporting written statement that highlighted the wind as the key 'driver' of the process.

(b) Spurn Head has been created by longshore drift.

Outline the process of longshore drift.

You may use a diagram to help your answer.



Long shore drift moves beach materials along the beach ~~using~~. The waves push material up the beach (swash) and back down (backwash) the prevailing wind moves the materials diagonally.



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Examiner Comments

Wow! An excellent response for foundation level. Diagram is clear and easy to read. Written statements provide additional information, e.g. descriptions of swash and backwash.

Question 5(c)

This question created a wide variety of responses. Candidates were asked to describe the problems caused by coastline retreat in a named location. Although most students included some problems in their answer, few provided the level detail needed for level 3. A large number of candidates went 'off focus' either providing explanations of why the coastline was retreating or a description of the measures taken to reduce retreat rather than the problems caused. A significant minority of students were unable to name an appropriate location.

*(c) For a named location, describe the problems caused by coastal retreat.

(6)

Named location Holbeck hall Hotel

Holbeck hall was effected by coastal retreat as the cliff it was on was effected by rotational slumping. The coast was not protected ~~and~~ and as the coast eroded further it became too heavy and the cliff slumped taking half of the hotel into the sea with it. This caused problems as the owners lost their business and the insurance company didn't pay as it was an act of nature.



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Examiner Comments

Although this candidate has identified a number of problems (cliff collapse, property and business loss) a lack of focus has prevented the student from achieving level 3. Most of the extended statements in this response focus on the reasons for cliff collapse rather than the problems caused.

Question 6(a)

As with the mirror question on section 5, there was a surprisingly high number of incorrect answers. Candidate responses would suggest that a large number of candidates are still not clear of the difference between a landform and a process. A number of students opted for landforms learnt in other topics, several gave volcano!

Question 6(b)

Overall, most students struggled on this question. Although the majority of candidates were able to make some sort of basic statement about rocks being dragged / carried downstream by the current, few were able to write any extending statements. Less than 5% seemed to be aware that rivers transport materials through four processes (traction, saltation, suspension and solution). These processes were the original intended outcome for the question.

Question 6(c)

Overall, students performed well on this question. Most candidates identified an appropriate location and were able to highlight a number of flood prevention measures. For level 3, students were required to describe how two or more of these actions actually reduces the flood risk. A significant number of candidates were restricted to level 1 as their response included a long list of actions with no extending statements.

*(c) For a named location, describe the actions taken to reduce flood risk.

(6)

Named location Boscastle.

People on Boscastle were flooded so the rivers bed has been deepened to create a bigger volume of space for the water to fill up there for ~~also~~ a lower risk of floods they also use things like flood gates to stop water getting into their homes.



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Examiner Comments

Candidate identifies two actions (river channel deepening and floodgates) but is restricted to level two as there is no attempt to explain how floodgates work. The first part of this answer is excellent, the candidate highlights the action of channel deepening and then describes how this action increases channel volume and lowers flood risk.



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Examiner Tip

The number of lines provided should help candidates structure their response. This candidate should have realised that more detail was needed to achieve full marks by the amount of spare space. For level 3 you are usually required to describe/explain **two** points. Try your best to balance your answer, giving an equal level of detail to both of the points you've raised.

Question 7(a)

As the question started with 'From Figure 7...' only travel difficulties and the spread of disease were correct answer. This was a skills point, students were being tested on their ability to extract information from a resource.

Question 7(b)

Overall this question was answered well by most candidates. Bleaching and fish migration caused by raising temperatures or changing acidity were the most common responses. A minority of candidates lost marks for identifying a problem that was not climate change related, e.g. 'over fishing'.

Question 7(c)

This question created a good range of responses. The vast majority of candidates were able to identify a pressure and offered some explanation of its impact. Disappointingly, a considerable number of candidates with clear explanations worthy of higher level scores were held back as they failed to name an appropriate local scale example.

*(c) For a named local-scale marine ecosystem, explain why it is under pressure. (6)

Named local-scale marine ecosystem Coral Reefs

Coral reefs are under pressure due by tourism and climate change. Tourism is effecting them by people destroying them by tramping on them and breaking the out shell. They are under pressure by climate change because the planet is heating up which is causing the sea to heat up to a certain temperature that coral can't control the temperature they are living in.



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Examiner Comments

A good response. Candidate identified two pressures, tourism and climate change. For both of the pressures identified some explanation is provided, although this is a little too basic for full marks.

Question 8(a)

Most candidates correctly identified a benefit. However, a significant minority failed to score by providing an inadequate response, i.e. money. Clearly, money was around before tourism began and would be still if tourism stopped! Candidates needed to highlight that the amount of money was increasing because of tourist spending.

Question 8(b)

Most candidates scored both marks on this question. A wide range of problems of problems were identified, from environmental impacts to cultural dilution. A minority of candidates went 'off focus' describing general problems (such as a lack of water for crops) rather than stating tourism related problems.

Question 8(c)

This question created a lot of excellent answers. Most candidates produced responses of either level 2 or 3 standard. Students clearly had a good knowledge of the survival techniques used by local people in both hot arid and polar regions. In many cases, students had achieved full marks half way through their response!

*(c) For a named region, describe how people cope with an extreme climate.

(6)

Named region A tania laska

Sloped roof to allow snow to slide off. Thick triple glazed windows to keep the heat in. Houses built on stilts to prevent the heat from the houses melting the permafrost. Thick roads to prevent the heat from the cars melting the permafrost. Carabosur wore arctic gear to layers thick. Gorse down in boot to keep their feet ~~is~~ warm. Mordan gor-tex ~~is~~ worn now to keep ~~is~~ warm.



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Examiner Comments

An excellent example. Answer includes countless coping strategies with a number of extending statements, e.g. triple glazing to reduce heat loss, houses on stilts to prevent permafrost melt. Candidate also guarantees a level 3 score by showing good location specific knowledge and vocabulary.

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Order Code UG026373 January 2011

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