

Examiners' Report
June 2012

GCSE Geography 5GB3H 01

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Introduction

This year's entry was higher than any so far, a situation created by the popularity of the topic among both teachers and candidates and the final cohort of candidates for whom modular entry is an option. Whilst previous topics have demonstrated good candidate knowledge, this year's provided a cohort of candidates who clearly know a great deal about London's 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Knowledge of both the geographical nature of the 2012 Games, together with detailed knowledge about the area of east London in which they took place, ensured that examiners reported widely on the quality of candidate geographical knowledge and key terms.

This year produced some very good standards of writing. There was a much larger entry this year, and the maturity of candidates taking the examination at the end of Year 11 was reflected in the standard. This was a demanding examination in which two thirds of the marks were allocated to extended writing for those questions which carry 6 marks or more. Once again, it produced some exceptional quality responses for those questions of 6 or 9 marks. Candidates showed more evidence of structuring their writing, so that a 'whatever comes next' style was less common. On Question 3a, particularly, this was a critical skill.

The overwhelming majority of candidates had been very well prepared and could refer their way through the Resource Booklet with ease. Most possessed very good geographical vocabulary so that terms such as 'deprivation' and 'regeneration' were widely used in a range of contexts by candidates across several answers. The Resource Booklet had again been very well used in the preparation of candidates; the widespread use of the 'Ning' for this specification again resulted in several members posting lesson resources and mock test papers for others to use. This was very pleasing indeed and reflects a considerable amount of creative planning and also assessment experience among teachers of this specification. Amongst those resources noted was a range of mock exams, which demonstrates how important it is to get timing right, and how well teachers are preparing candidates in this respect.

There was once again real evidence of candidates making linkages across the specification, particularly to Unit 2 Topic 5 (Changing Urban Environments). This was one of the original purposes in developing this specification, and it is pleasing that teachers are encouraging candidates to make conceptual links. One particular feature of note was the detailed knowledge and understanding of 'sustainability', and especially this year its economic and social, as well as environmental, dimensions. This was of course partly the result of the organisation of the Resource Booklet, but again it was noteworthy that candidates had been drawn away from dependency upon case studies and towards deep understanding of geographical concepts such as this.

Far fewer candidates showed evidence of struggling with timing this year compared to previous cohorts; there were gaps and rushed answers, but not to the extent seen in previous years. Teachers are clearly giving very sound guidance and practice in preparing their candidates for this examination. The evidence is that the majority of candidates now manage their time well in completing the examination. However, a minority do run short of time, particularly in answering Questions 3a and 3b, which could often be traced back to the level of detail given in earlier answers. Examiners continue to advise teachers to help candidates in this respect by preparing them using timed writing exercises. Paying attention to time in respect of, first, broadly equal allocation of time across the three sections, and, second, using space as guidance for how much to write, ought to help candidates. This is particularly true where candidates write well-rehearsed answers for Questions 3a and 3b first, often exceeding the space and writing on extension sheets, only to find that they ran short of time and failed to complete Section B.

Once again, in spite of many positives, there remains a 'tail' of candidates who were less well prepared. A few candidates use Questions 3a and b as an opportunity for polemic rather than using evidence as a basis for making decisions. Less capable candidates used tabloid-style 'keep young people off the streets or they'll turn to a life of crime' rather than referring the need for affordable housing, for example, to housing data in Section B of the Resource Booklet.

Question 1 (a)

Because of the nature of the question, and its position in the paper as one targeting all abilities, a wide range of answers was acceptable. Nearly all candidates gained the mark with 'Newham', 'Stratford', 'the Lea Valley' or 'East London' (or two, or even all of these). Only a very few candidates gave incorrect answers, and there were even fewer blank responses.

1 Use Section A in the Resource Booklet to answer this question.

(a) Identify the location of the Olympic Park in London.

(1)

Newham



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

In an examination where timing was critical, single word or short phrase answers can get candidates a mark, just as well as full sentences. Encourage candidates to use short answers on 1-2 mark questions to save time.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

One word for a correct answer is all that's needed here. This examination puts you under real pressure of time, so cut back on words where you can on shorter answers.

Question 1 (b)

Candidates answered this question well, with most candidates identifying the majority of venues as in London and south-east England. Most candidates scored well on this question, gaining at least 3 marks. The best answers included examples from the Resource Booklet and were able to pick up 3 marks just from one well developed statement. Many candidates referred to specific venues outside London e.g. sailing in Weymouth, or locations in Wales and Scotland. More able candidates clearly described the distribution referring to the figures in the Resource Booklet, often with more detail than was required to achieve full marks; a significant number of candidates could have scored more than 4.

Some less able candidates failed to gain full marks by listing the various locations rather than describing a distribution. The most common errors were in describing the venues as spread evenly across the UK, and confusing venues 12, 13 and 14 on Figure 2 as part of London. Some candidates did not understand 'distribution' which meant that they tended to list specific places without taking an overview. A few candidates focussed on the distribution within London without referring to wider UK distributions.

(b) Study Figures 2 and 3 in the Resource Booklet.

Describe the distribution of the 2012 Games' venues within the UK.

(4)

There is a spread of olympic venues around the country, however a majority of the venues are in London, for example the olympic park and the Wimbledon tennis. There is also at least one venue in each country, for example football group matches in the Millennium stadium in cardiff



ResultsPlus

Examiner Comments

This answer could have gained 5 marks if they were available; distribution 'around the country', a majority of venues in London (plus exemplification), and then 2 marks for an exemplified description of football. This was an excellent example of the kind of description which did not even take all the answer space, yet still gained maximum marks.



ResultsPlus

Examiner Tip

4 marks on a question like this can usually be gained by making two descriptions and then developing these with examples. Use examples where ever you can, both in questions like this and later on 6- and 9-mark questions. It shows examiners that you know how to develop points.

Question 1 (c)

This question was done well; the more able candidates developed their answers by referring to specific examples. A large number of candidates referred to the Olympic sustainability aim of reusing existing venues rather than building from scratch, many referring to Old Trafford as an example. Many were aware of the pressure on London's physical environment and transport facilities as a reason for dispersal of venues across the UK, as well as those who recognised the importance of engaging the UK as a whole in the Olympic and Paralympic Games. Many candidates linked a lack of space and facilities in the Olympic Park as a reason for locating sailing and mountain biking events, though assumptions about Essex as a suitable mountainous environment were wide of the mark.

(c) Suggest why **not all** 2012 Games' events are being held in the Olympic Park.

(4)

So that the Olympic Games affects most of Great Britain, not just London. Also, some events such as Sailing have to be held elsewhere, as the Olympic park hasn't got the facilities. Venues in Scotland and Wales show that a whole nation is involved. Tourism will be present across the whole of the UK because the games are covering such a high number of cities.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

This was an excellent answer. There were several points here, each worth a mark: 'affects most of Britain' plus later exemplification of Scotland and Wales; the lack of facilities for some sports in the Olympic park, plus an example; and tourism across the UK, with a final developed point.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Tip

Read this to see how many developed points you can spot? This candidate could actually have got 6 marks - yet still keeps within the answer space.

Question 1 (d)

This question proved to be a good discriminator. The key to good answers – as indicated in the mark scheme – proved to be how well developed points were. Markers were instructed to consider either three developed or two well-developed points as evidence for Level 3. Whilst a few candidates lifted annotation from the Resource Booklet with little further development, in the main most candidates used data provided to give a coherent explanation of Stratford's transport connections. Some structured their answers well, often using a local/regional/national/international framework, but there were many other approaches. Good answers showed clear understanding of national and international transport links, giving examples of each. Candidates commonly mentioned links with St Pancras and the Eurostar, and via the tube or rail links to London's airports, making international travel easy. Many candidates were also able to point out that Stratford was 10 minutes from Central London and the significance of this.

Some answers dealt more with London than Stratford, which tended to restrict candidates to Level 2. A few candidates simply wrote about why a good transport network was helpful, or could contribute towards a more sustainable Games, and thus scored low marks. Some described links, for example to main roads or motorways, but did not develop these to show Stratford's links to named places, or how these links made Stratford well connected.

Stratford has many underground and surface rail links that are directly connected to airports such as Heathrow and Gatwick so international travellers can easily get to the Olympic Park. Also coach routes are available from Stansted Airport, Cambridge and Hertfordshire where many people will be arriving from that link to Stratford. Moreover, with about half a million people coming to the Olympic Park there are public transport available like 15 bus routes that serve Stratford which will be available for local people on average 6 buses per hr. Travellers from abroad will also be arriving to London St Pancras and it is 10 minutes on train direct to Stratford.



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

This was a classic answer of the kind that examiners look for to reach the top of Level 3 for 6 marks. Examiners look for either three developed or two well-developed points on a 6-mark question. This fits the former; rail links to airports were expanded to explain how this made it easier for overseas travellers, access for local people was developed with the example of bus networks, and finally developed links for travellers to St Pancras and central London.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

To reach the top of Level 3, you need to either three developed or two well-developed points. Read through this answer, which gained 6-marks, and see how this candidate has developed points.

Question 2 (a)

The incline of difficulty within each section gave every candidate a chance to recover, so that this response was very successful in candidate responses. The thrust of the answer was of course that affordable housing was for those on lower incomes. A few candidates simply used the word 'affordable' in their definition, which prevented any credit, but the large majority made a reasonable attempt, using such terms as 'cheap housing', 'housing for those on low incomes', or 'housing which the local population could afford'. 'Average incomes' was not credited.

2 Use Section B in the Resource Booklet to answer this question.

(a) Define 'affordable housing'.

(1)

*low-cost properties within low income
peoples' financial means*



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

'Affordable housing' is a complex term, so it's important for candidates to have a quick response available to any of the italicised terms in the Resource Booklet.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Tip

Make sure you know the meaning of the italicised words in the Resource Booklet. You don't need to rote-learn every one, just get an understanding that you can phrase in your own words.

Question 2 (b)

This was answered very well by most candidates, often including 4 rather than 3 points. Two straightforward comparisons and one example of data exemplification or manipulation was sufficient to gain all 3 marks. Most commonly, candidates either compared general patterns (e.g. 'Newham has a more youthful population than the UK',

'Newham has higher percentages than the UK average for ages up to 30-34', or 'Newham has smaller percentages for those over 45'), as well as reference to specific age bands, e.g. 'Newham has more children aged 0-4 than the UK average'. In all cases, comparative statements were required, so that simple descriptions (e.g. 'Newham has a youthful population') were not credited.

Mistakes were relatively few, but occasionally candidates used the wrong resource and described differences in ethnicity rather than age structure.

Some wrote about Newham's high death rate, which they then continued as a theme into Question 2c, in which they wrote about people dying young because they couldn't afford health care. High death rate was not credited, because there was no evidence for this; such candidates did not allow for migration as a factor.

(b) Study Figure 5 in the Resource Booklet.

Compare the population structure of Newham with that of the UK.

(3)

Newham have by far a younger population, they have 8.2% 0-4 ^{female} whereas UK has 5%. The UK has an older population in both female and male. They have similar 40-44 age gap.



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

Make sure that candidates are aware of what they must do with questions asking them to 'compare'. Comparative statements must be made - just as this candidate does, with 'younger' and 'older'. These two comparisons were each worth a mark, and the use of data provided a third mark. Encourage candidates to use data to exemplify wherever they can, both in questions like this and in longer questions requiring extended writing later in the paper.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Two important things to look out for - first, 'compare' means you must make comparisons ('younger', 'older'). Second - two comparisons plus use of data to illustrate points will get you 3 marks.

Question 2 (c)

Many candidates did this question well, the best answers using data from the Resource Booklet. Candidates seemed to understand fully how a number of factors can influence deprivation levels. Two comparisons, each with data to illustrate and develop the statement, were sufficient for 4 marks. Evidence of both interpretation and manipulation of the data in Figure 7 enabled candidates to refer to percentage differences between Newham and London. Many made comparisons of unemployment rates, qualifications and type of job very competently. Some could have scored far more as they identified three or more areas of deprivation and used data to support their comparisons.

A few candidates discussed greater ethnicity in the area, without credit, though one or two linked this to deprivation linked to language problems, for which they were credited. Some answers compared Newham to the rest of England, rather than London, gaining no credit, together with a few who referred to Figure 5 and Newham's population structure. A few candidates copied out all the criteria used to gather data for the government index for Figure 7, wasting valuable time and space.

(c) Outline the evidence that the population of Newham is more deprived than the rest of London.

(4)

Newham is more deprived than the rest of London because Newham has a higher percentage of unemployed people with 6.7% whereas London has a lower percentage of unemployed people with 4.4%. Also, Newham has a higher percentage of their population who have no educational qualifications, with 34% whereas London have a lower percentage of people with no educational qualifications with 24%. This is 10% lower than Newham.



ResultsPlus

Examiner Comments

The rules for this question were much the same as for Question 2b, i.e. that two comparisons of Newham and London, each supported by data, would gain 4 marks. The key factor in success here was to compare data for Newham and London, not Newham and the UK, so candidates had to be selective about which data to use.

Question 2 (d)

This question proved to be a good discriminator, with few candidates reaching 6 marks. Many candidates understood the gist of the question, but few really tackled it and grasped what economic regeneration might mean beyond a simple 'it will mean jobs'. Candidates often deployed a list approach with no real explanation or understanding of regeneration. Many sought to tell the story of Docklands and the relocation of companies to make way for the Olympic Park, rather than tell the story of how the creation of the Olympic Park might unfold new opportunities.

That said some candidates were very clear about bringing new opportunities to an area of severe deprivation. Most answers at some stage focused upon job creation, first through the construction of the Olympic venues themselves, but then through the supply chain. Higher quality answers explained the multiplier effect very well, with enhanced spending power being reflected in more spending in local shops and local demand for services increasing. More able candidates still could see the benefits of altering the image of the area and the ways in which greater investment in new services and industries might transform the area by bringing new forms of employment once the Games were over (e.g. media). Several could see the potential of an enhanced tourism and/or sports industry and the benefits for the hospitality industry.

The development of the Olympic Park was planned to ~~regenerate~~ regenerate the economy of east London ~~by~~ in many ways. For example, in order to lower the levels of unemployment (as shown on figure 9a), the Olympic Park ~~was~~ ~~has~~ opened up the opportunity of creating thousands of jobs, including 7000 temporary jobs, with 5000 in construction jobs alone (as shown in figure 16). This would help employ ~~some~~ the semi-skilled or unskilled people, as shown in figure 9b, and in turn could help these people increase their incomes, as they are very low at the moment, as shown by figures. Also, developing the Olympic Park would attract tourists, as when the complex is complete and the spectators begin to come to watch the Games, they would need places to stay and eat, bringing in money to the local economy through local cafés and hotels; ~~therefore~~ therefore regenerating it.



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

This was a very good example of how two well-developed points could reach 6 marks at the top of Level 3. The first point was very well developed - it extended the points about employment, both giving ample evidence (by referring to Figure numbers) and also explained the consequences of increasing employment. The second point about tourism was shorter but also well developed about its consequences.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

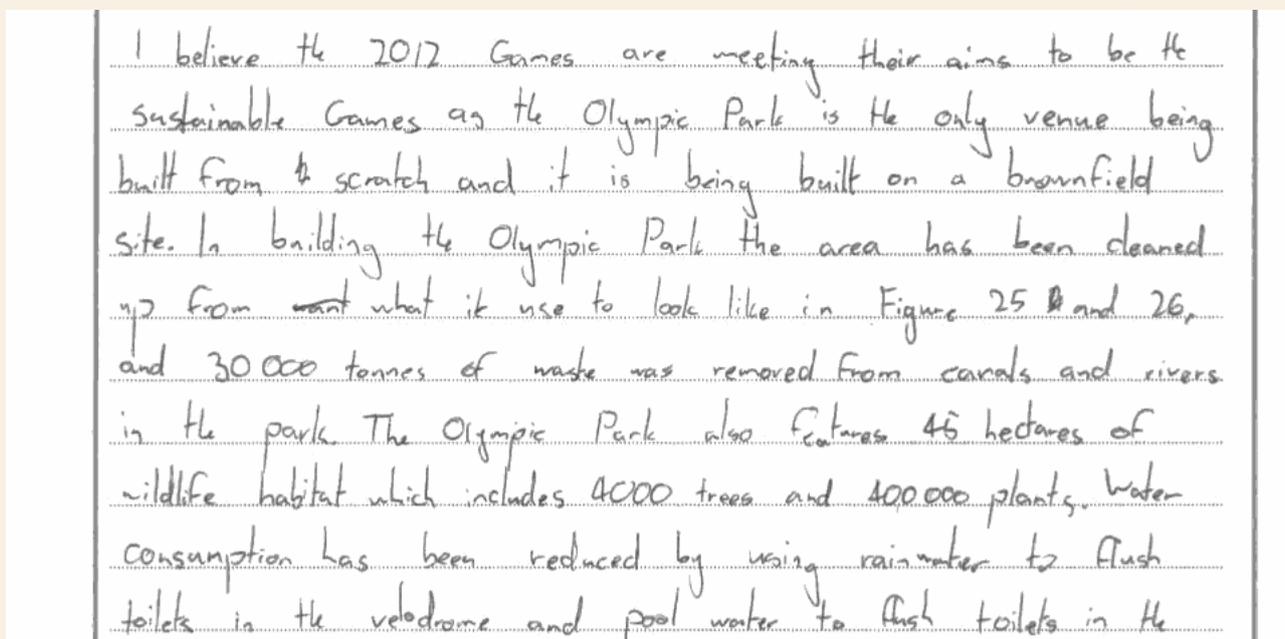
This is a good example of how to get 6 marks from two well-developed points, about employment and about tourism. It also shows you how to use evidence well - note how this candidate quotes Figure numbers from the Resource Booklet.

Question 2 (e)

This question gave the candidates the opportunity to use a variety of information sources from the Resource Booklet. Much more than in previous years, the vast majority of candidates had a clear understanding of sustainability. This is heartening, since the concept lies at the heart of the specification. Almost all candidates in this Tier seemed to understand clearly the concept, and many teachers clearly use the concept of the 'three-legged stool' in terms of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainability. More than any of the extended writing questions, almost all wrote answers to this question in their own words and were able to construct arguments such as the environmental and economic strengths of the 2012 Games for Newham, whilst being aware that social housing remains a concern. At the lower end, a few candidates discussed Newham as if it were a developing country, in discussing a range of criteria from Figure 29 and then referring to Newham's lack of access to education and medical care.

Less able candidates tended to focus largely on environmental improvements to the area, e.g. the use of a brownfield site for redevelopment and the creation of new wildlife habitats. A few simply lifted whole passages of text, which restricted them to Level 1. Some did not take account of the focus for the command word – i.e. 'how far you believe...' – and that they needed to evaluate. More able candidates tended to apply the Olympic Park design to a wide range of criteria, such as the sustainable use of resources and building technology and design (e.g. in the use of water and energy). At the very top end, sustainability was linked with the concept of legacy. At the higher end, candidates selected two or three factors and concentrated on their analysis of sustainability in respect of these.

Relatively few candidates actually referred to their own scores from Figure 29, either overall or by criterion. A few candidates did list their scores for each element but with no discussion as to how they had reached these. Candidates should be steered by their teachers to use evidence in the Resource Booklet wherever possible.



I believe the 2012 Games are meeting their aims to be the sustainable Games as the Olympic Park is the only venue being built from the scratch and it is being built on a brownfield site. In building the Olympic Park the area has been cleaned up from what it used to look like in Figure 25 and 26, and 30 000 tonnes of waste was removed from canals and rivers in the park. The Olympic Park also features 46 hectares of wildlife habitat which includes 4000 trees and 400 000 plants. Water consumption has been reduced by using rain water to flush toilets in the velodrome and pool water to flush toilets in the

agnatics centre. The athletes villages will also be used for affordable housing after the games, benefitting the community.



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Examiner Comments

Sometimes candidates get to the top of Level 3 by giving a broad overview. This one did the job very well; there was good development about the brownfield site and its altered appearance, together with a broad range of other points designed to demonstrate how well this candidate understood sustainability and the demands of Figure 29 in the Resource Booklet.



ResultsPlus

Examiner Tip

This answer provides an excellent overview of sustainability for a top Level 3 6 marks. If you are asked to refer to a particular Figure, then take it stage by stage, and offer evidence, just as this candidate does.

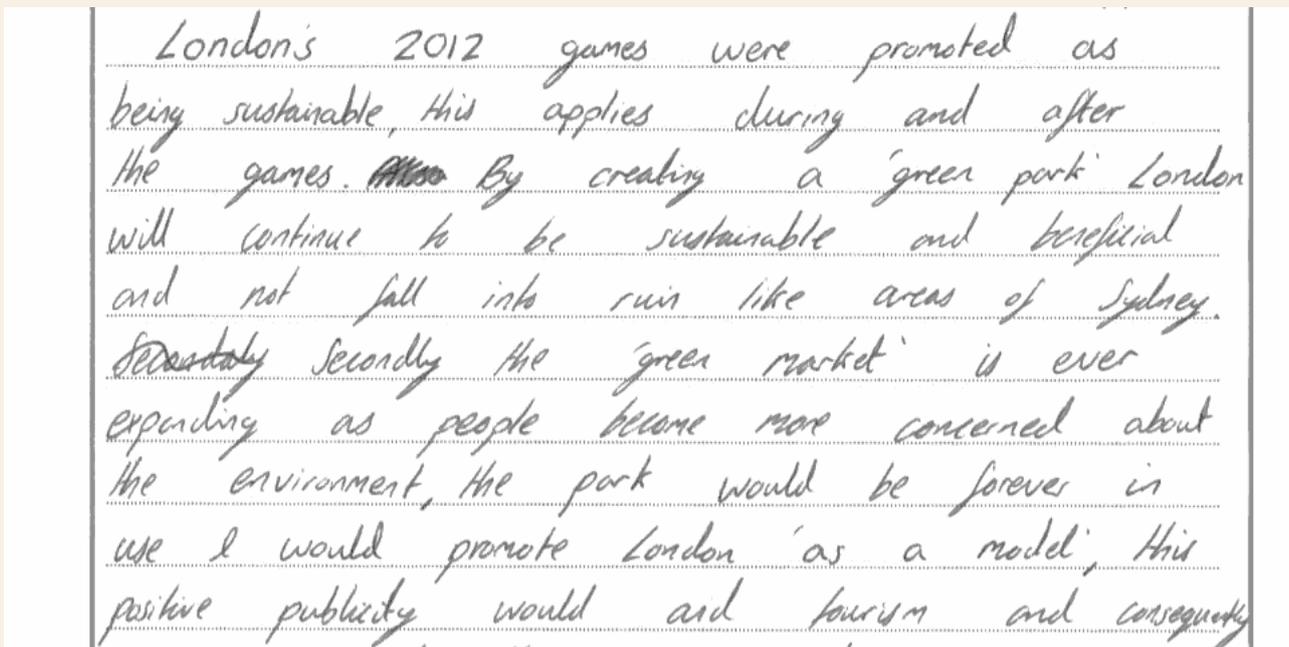
Question 3 (a)

This question was generally done well, and certainly discriminated well between a range of excellent answers, supported by evidence, and rather weaker un-evidenced opinions. Most candidates finished this answer; a few wrote in bullet points as the answer progressed, but there was little evidence of undue time pressure. Almost all completed this whole section. The best answers used evidence from the Resource Booklet to support their answers and justified their choices well. These candidates were also able to demonstrate that there were disadvantages with any of the three options.

Generally there was a good understanding of all three economic options, and they were chosen fairly equally. Many candidates were able to highlight several advantages with evidence and focused on negatives of other options in terms of, for instance, inappropriate employment opportunities, or further in-migration to Newham and negative impacts of this. Answers for Option 3 tended to polarise between very strong and weak responses, with several candidates who selected the sports option providing very strong rationales for ways in which sport could regenerate an area; such candidates often selected Option 6 for Question 3b.

One issue remains that a significant number of candidates capped themselves at the top of Level 2 (6 marks) because they failed to evaluate weaknesses of their chosen option, or explain their reasons for rejecting the other two options. Either is a pathway into Level 3, but many candidates simply wrote about the advantages for their chosen option and did not grasp the significance of the word 'Justify', in spite of the fact that this is the third consecutive year in which the command word has been used. The term 'most benefit' was that which candidates failed to address well, failing to reach Level 3 because of the absence of advantages or disadvantages, or an assessment of their chosen option against the others.

Many answers were short and failed to use the full writing space. This was particularly disappointing, as several responses that began with a well justified point failed to extend beyond this. Many candidates focused their answer upon how their choice was the most sustainable rather than that which would most benefit people of east London. Many answers fell into Level 2 because of a lack of fully developed statements using evidence. Many such candidates lacked relevant geographical terminology, and paid little attention to the use of the key words from the Resource Booklet. Less able candidates tended to provide a list of suppositions without development or evidence (e.g. 'it will bring jobs ...' without being specific about what kind of jobs or data demonstrating the need for jobs). Weakest answers contained a great deal of lifted material and failed to quote evidence from the Resource Booklet to support their case.



London's 2012 games were promoted as being sustainable, this applies during and after the games. ~~Also~~ By creating a 'green park' London will continue to be sustainable and beneficial and not fall into ruin like areas of Sydney. ~~Secondly~~ Secondly the 'green market' is ever expanding as people become more concerned about the environment, the park would be forever in use I would promote London 'as a model', this positive publicity would aid tourism and consequently

the economy. Also the environmental benefits of the research would be numerous. Finally the best factor is that jobs would be provided for managerial workforces and semi-skilled such as construction and internships. This fulfills the sustainable criteria of benefiting people from all communities, it would be particularly key in Newham where 6.7% are unemployed, almost double that in England (3.4%) (see fig 9a) and income is some of the lowest in England & Wales (see figure 8). I believe it is better than option 2 as that would only

provide jobs for highly skilled workers not locals who need it most. Option 3 would only be used a few times a year so any jobs would be temporary.



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Examiner Comments

This answer developed four points, two of them well, to reach the top of Level 3. It was well sequenced and coherent, and used evidence. Geographical language was abundant. Although the other options were covered just briefly, it was nonetheless sufficient to evidence a full justification.



ResultsPlus

Examiner Tip

This answer shows you what a 9-mark, top Level 3 answer looks like. To reach this you should:

- develop about 4 points, at least one of them well
- quote precise evidence - don't generalise
- sequence your writing coherently - first, second etc.

You might find scribbling a few notes first can help you achieve this.

Question 3 (b)

This answer was slightly weaker than Question 3a overall, not because of the absence of candidates who scored 6 marks (of whom there were a good number), but the large number of those who struggled to write about social factors and drifted back into economic aspects such as employment. As with Question 3a, many who chose the sports option (Option 6) articulated the value of a world-class sports university very clearly as a boost for local aspiration. The best candidates were able to show awareness that no option could give Newham the perfect answer to its problems. Less able candidates who selected Option 6 often wrongly assumed that all young local teenagers would be eligible to attend and improve their lives. There was a tendency to devolve answers into tabloid language, e.g. 'it will stop them committing crime and keep them off the streets'.

Most candidates had a very good understanding of exactly how their chosen option would improve the social aspects of Newham. However a number of candidates only focused on one advantage – the idea of 10,000 homes fulfilling Newham's housing shortage- rather than looking at a range of different options. However, evidence was often lacking in candidate answers; this question more than Question 3a seemed to generate unsubstantiated opinion rather than analysis. Option 5 was overwhelmingly the most popular choice, but often generated more Level 1 and 2 answers. Relatively few, for example, linked the need for family housing to Newham's youthful population. Some answered very well, commenting on how the chosen option linked to the people of Newham. A fairly high number answered which they felt was the best social option, without necessarily linking to the needs of the people in Newham. A few responses were blank or consisted of bullet points, indicating that candidates may have run out of time but these were rare. A useful pointer to teachers is to stress how important it is to express answers to short questions in phrases rather than full sentences earlier in the examination.

This option will most benefit the residents of Newham as it will ~~be~~ provide them a location in which to be educated and gain qualifications which will lower the 34% of people without educational qualifications which will also pave the way for them to gain more managerial and professional employment and will rise the 34.7% of people with those types of jobs who live in Newham. This option will also benefit Newham as the sports university could promote healthier living/lifestyles to the people in the surrounding area. This option will also provide a suitable location to conduct sporting research and to conduct training for future potential professional athletes because of the availability of the usage of the sporting venues, e.g. Aquatics Centres

(Total for Question 3 = 15 marks)



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

This was a classic way of achieving the top of Level 3 for 6 marks; it developed three points well, it used plenty of specific evidence to support points, and related it to wider issues such as health and sport.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Three developed points is what it takes to get to the top of Level 3. Always use specific evidence, either by quoting data, or Figure numbers.

Paper Summary

The following points may prove helpful to teachers, both as feedback to candidates for this examination, and in advising candidates in future years:

Mark allocation

Questions of 5 marks or fewer are point-marked; those over 6 marks are levelled. Statements that make points clearly will be credited. However, one feature common to both point- and level-marked questions is the need to **develop** answers. Even where a question asks for two statements for 4 marks (e.g. Question 1c), markers are instructed to credit developed answers that extend beyond basic statements. For example, in that question, 'The Olympic Park doesn't have open stretches of water (1) to cope with events such as sailing (1)' earns 2 marks as shown; further extension of the answer could result in a well-developed response, such as 'so that the organisers decided to locate it in Weymouth (1)'.

'Developed' answers can be achieved by using exemplification, in this case the use of sailing as an exemplar of lack of appropriate locations outside the Olympic Park and consequences, in this case resulting in the decision to locate sailing in Weymouth.

In the case of well developed answers, 3 marks can be achieved for developing a single factor. The guidance points given in the structure of some questions is there to assist candidates; markers are instructed to credit fully developed answers.

The importance of developing statements cannot be over-stated; markers look for developed answers as evidence of candidate achievement above Level 1, and for well-developed statements as evidence of achievement in Level 3.

Timing

The paper remains demanding in 60 minutes, though an even greater majority of candidates did complete the examination this year, including more able candidates who wrote at length. It will help prepare candidates for future examinations if teachers practice timed answers with their candidates, and help to keep candidates focused on the requirements of questions, such as focusing upon command words.

The use of evidence

It is difficult on a paper such as this – where decisions are personal choices, or where arguments have to be developed – for candidates not to revert to simple polemic in responding to, for instance, Questions 2f, 3a or 3b. Lower level answers often began 'In my opinion ...' and then proceeded to give their opinion without any use of evidence. Candidates should be reminded to use the evidence in the Resource Booklet. Some candidates make extremely effective use of this, either by quoting data (in their broadest sense) directly or by referring to Figure numbers, particular pages, or even phrases such as 'The evidence from Clays Lane shows that ...'. Teachers are urged to help candidates practice this kind of writing throughout the course, since it is this, as much as any other factor, which determines Levels in questions of 6 marks or more. It is the use of evidence on which candidates will be assessed, not their opinion. That said some teachers are clearly adept in developing this kind of writing at this level, since the best examples stand out clearly from the rest.

Key terms

The italicised terms are central to the issue in the examination. It is less important that candidates rote learn definitions of these terms than they understand their meaning and sense. With about 40 italicised terms in this year's Resource Booklet, only one was directly assessed by definition, but examiners do expect to be able to use the terms in questions, and candidates are expected to be able to use them as evidence towards the assessment of Quality of Written Communication (QWC), of which geographical language and terminology is an important element.

'Lifted' material

Some candidates wrote at length, but 'lifted' material directly from the booklet, or in ways that did not actually process the data. For example, many candidates asked to describe how well London was meeting the criteria for a sustainable Games for Question 2 (f), simply 'lifted' (i.e. copied verbatim) a number of statements from Figure 29 in the Resource Booklet, and gained few if any marks for doing so. A slightly paraphrased response might otherwise have gained credit by mentioning:

- planting 40 000 trees, resulting in an improved environment
- the creation of a 'soil hospital', resulting in reduced pollution
- the eviction of the residents of Clays Lane, adding to the problem of deprivation.

Some candidates merely listed some of the sustainable criteria, without any development or exemplification to show how well or less well these had been achieved. Teachers are encouraged to help candidates learn how to use evidence from the Resource Booklet in developing their answers.

Candidates who lift material verbatim from the booklet and no more (as opposed to using details as evidence) restrict themselves to Level 1 in the mark scheme. By contrast, even brief but nonetheless focused answers of just a few lines can access at least the top of Level 2. Encourage candidates to write less but in a more focused way directed at the question.

Handling Section C

Teachers can prepare candidates in developing reasoned answers for questions in Section C. Options in Section C of the Resource Booklet will always form the focus for Section C in the examination. Pre-prepared learned answers are not always helpful, because candidates may find the actual questions different, but those who practise reasoned and well-evidenced analysis of the options do stand out. Similarly, teachers should not encourage candidates to believe that there is any preference shown by markers towards particular options. In every case, the options are real ones proposed by real organisations; none are 'fictionalised' for the examination. Encourage candidates to take an individual view, and discourage them from thinking that there are any 'right' or 'wrong' options.

Preparation

Finally, it is important that candidates enter the examination having had the benefit of 12-15 hours preparation. Evidence over three cohorts (including a trial examination in 2010) shows a clear correlation between high standards reached by candidates in schools with the required preparation time, and much lower performances of those with less. Similarly, the publication of the Resource Booklet, and a PowerPoint of all the images contained within it, enabled some teachers to draw upon London 2012 as an example for use in teaching Unit 2 Topic 5 ('Changing Urban Environments'), thereby preparing candidates even better.

Grade Boundaries

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:

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