

Examiners' Report November 2007

IGCSE

IGCSE Geography (4370)

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Paper 1F

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General Comments

The Foundation Tier paper attracted only a small number of candidates. Nevertheless, there was a considerable range of ability with evidence of strong F tier work being provided. All three optional questions in Section B were attempted.

Question 1 : Water

This was a moderately well answered question and one of the higher scoring answers on most scripts. Waterfalls had clearly been taught and the processes involved in their formation were familiar to the candidates. The challenge in this question came with the task on benefits and problems in part (b).

Question 2 : Hazards

Again, some creditable responses were evident, especially in parts (a)(i) and (b)(i)-(iii). However, storm strength, storm surges and storm impact (part (c)) were generally less well known and understood.

Question 3 : Production

This proved to be a more challenging question with weaker scores typical. Research and Development (R & D), quaternary activities, hi-tech and mass production seemed unfamiliar ground for the candidates, especially in the context of the motor vehicle industry.

Question 4 : Development

Good use was made of Figure 4 (part (a)) and knowledge of GDP in part (b) was sound. However, the general quality of answering dipped in (b)(iii) and (c); neither the industry-GDP process nor Government development policy were well known and understood.

Question 5 : Migration

One of the better answered questions. Most candidates scored respectably in (a)(ii) and (iii). The refugee concept was generally known but the case study knowledge sought by (b)(iii) was often sketchy.

Question 6 : Urban Environments

This was another of the stronger responses, especially from Kenyan centres. Good use was made of the map, Figure 6a, and knowledge of shanty communities tended to be sound. There was clear evidence that candidates understood the demands of parts (a)(v) and (b) though answers tended to be outlines and lacking in development.

Question 7 : Fragile Environments

There were few answers to this question and those that did opt for deforestation produced responses of contrasting quality. The stronger candidates wrote authoritatively about the causes, process and consequences of deforestation. Agroforestry was less well known and quite unfamiliar to some.

Question 8 : Globalisation

Again, only few responded to the question though the concepts assessed were generally grasped and all question parts were elicited student responses. The source material (Figures 8a and b) proved to be very accessible to the candidates who answered well direct data-response tasks. Tasks requiring the linking of information (i.e. part (b)(iii)) and evaluation (i.e. part (c)) provided a greater challenge.

Question 9 : Human Welfare

The few scripts available were relatively weak. Part (a)(i) proved surprisingly challenging as did (b)(i). The causes of famine question (part (b)(iii)) was limited to a listing of relevant factors, and case study knowledge was absent from part (c). Candidates found the data reading tasks in parts (a)(ii) and (iii) the most rewarding.

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Paper 2H

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General Comments

The entry though again small, was slightly larger than in November 2005 and 2006. The range of quality of the scripts was very large. There were some of very high quality but a significant number of weaker scripts. These candidates may have been better served by entry for paper 1F. The scripts, however, were generally complete and answering gaps and rubric offences rare. Broadly speaking, the amount of case study knowledge and the interpretation and general use of resource material were of a slightly lower standard than in previous examinations. All three questions in Section B had candidates opting for them.

Question 1 : Water

This was a moderately well answered question. There were no very strong scores and little evidence that waterfall formation had been comprehensively taught. Attempted explanations of process tended to be sketchy and disjointed, and the reasoning as to why they are upper/mid-course features sought by part (d) was rather vague.

Question 2 : Hazards

Question 2 scored well. Good use of Figure 2 was made in (a)(i) and there was general awareness of oceans as a heat/energy source in (a)(ii). Almost all candidates knew a name other than cyclone for a tropical storm (part (b)(i)). There were many strong answers on damage limitation in (b)(ii) and most candidates were able to at least offer the weather features associated with tropical storms in part (c).

Question 3 : Production

A generally well answered question. Candidates knew of Research and Development (R&D), the global shift in manufacturing and many were familiar with the quaternary sector of economic activities. However, disappointingly the photograph (Figure 3) was not always the focus of the responses to part (a)(i).

Question 4 : Development

The scripts revealed a mixed set of answers to this question. There were few strong (a)(i) responses though all candidates did score. Some candidates appreciated what the examiners were looking for in (a)(ii) but an equal number produced generic and unreferenced answers. Part (b) posed few problems for the candidates but part (c) responses varied from specific and place-referenced strategies to vague generalisations. It was pleasing that so many candidates identified the wealth gap in part (d) before developing a likely future scenario.

Question 5 : Migration

The migration question tends to be well answered and the topic well understood. This was less the case in this examination. Some candidates experienced difficulties, especially with the data-based tasks in part (a). Generic responses were all too typical in this early part of the question. The concept of a refugee was generally familiar to candidates in (b)(i) but many confused refugee flows with those of a general immigration nature in (b)(ii). There were some respectable responses to part (c) with the difficulties of controlling immigration being known by an encouraging number of candidates.

Question 6 : Urban Environments

This proved to be a relatively well answered question. Kenyan centres in particular, seemed to find it accessible. The concept of self-help was known to all candidates (part (a)(iii)), and most were able to link Figures 6a and 6b and thereby access Level 2 marks in part (b). There were too few Level 3 responses to (c) but Level 1 at least, was available to most candidates.

Question 7 : Fragile Environments

This tended to be both the highest scoring and most popular of the Section B optional questions. All choosing this option started well and showed good map reading skills (part (a)), an understanding of the impacts of deforestation (part (b)), and an appreciation of the reasons that lie behind it (part (c)). However, agroforestry was unfamiliar to some, and all scripts failed to show a link between it and sustainability (part (d)). Part (e) proved to be a respectably scoring closing task with many creditworthy examples of tropical rainforest conservation schemes being offered.

Question 8 : Globalisation

This was the least popular of the Section B questions. Part (a) responses tended to be comprehensible, on the right lines and moderately scoring. Part (b) saw few candidates making proper use of the data provided and expressing the geographical ideas sought and expected. Responses to part (c) were typically sketchy with appropriate advantages and disadvantages being identified but frequently few in number. Short lists were common. The concept of global shift was relatively well known, but there were very few detailed responses including examples and fully explained reasons in (d).

Question 9 : Human Welfare

This question was the other popular choice in Section B. It proved overall to be a medium scoring question. The quality of the resource material reading was a little disappointing, especially of Figure 9b though candidates frequently extracted little evidence from Figure 9a in their answering of (a)(ii). Part (b)(iii) tended to be well answered, and there were some decent quality responses with a range of valid schemes set in a named context in part (c). Part (d) generated little good geography; candidates brought little to the examination in this field beyond an interpretation of the Figure 9c spiral diagrams provided.

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Paper 03

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General comments

The skills based paper, offered as an alternative to coursework, was generally well received by both centres and candidates. The majority of the November 2007 cohort was entered for Paper 3, which was common to both the Foundation and Higher tiers. A reasonable number of, but not all, candidates demonstrated a wide range of geographical skills. All candidates were able to complete the paper within the time limit

The paper proved to be accessible to those entered for the Foundation Tier while a number of Higher Tier candidates achieved high marks. The majority of candidates were well prepared for questions 1 and 2, although, as in previous series, some of the topics selected for centre based field work (question 3) had limited geographical relevance.

Questions 1 and 2

Both these questions required the candidates to use a variety of resources and geographical skills. The majority of candidates were more familiar with the skills required for Question 1 and therefore tended to find this question a little more accessible.

The basic graph interpretation in section (a) presented few problems and enabled candidates to make a confident start to the paper. Most were able to accurately complete the flow arrows in b(i), but then listed the number of tourists from each country instead of describing the patterns in b(ii). In the following, the candidate addresses the overall pattern:-

'Most of the tourists are from the northwest which is Great Britain, while the rest of the tourist is from the northerly direction. There are no tourists from the south.'

The majority of candidates were able to provide adequate or stronger answers in section c, however relatively few considered both the advantages and disadvantages of tourism in section d, the following is a typical level 2 answer, emphasizing the positive aspects of tourism:-

'Yes, tourism has brought Ayia Napa foreign exchange which is good for Cyprus and the economy at large, due to the hotels employment and job opportunities have been created for the local people of Cyprus. This boosts the GDP and the standards of living.'

As with previous examination series, Question 2 resulted in a slightly wider spread of marks than Question 1. The first sections proved to be accessible, and resulted in some very accurate plotting. When considering section c, candidates frequently confused the height of buildings with environmental quality, despite the fact that these were shown separately on the resource, and therefore the responses were limited. Section d featured some accurate graph plotting, and most candidates were able to see some trends in water quality and discharge between the data collection

sites in d(ii). The following high level extract demonstrates a candidate who included explanations based on all the resource material in their answer:-

'The natural quality of the water was lessened due to the runoff from farming activities near Pangbourne. Discharge was also low due to possible permeable soil conditions At site 3, quality is reduced by the presence of agricultural activity.'

Question 3

This question enables candidates to demonstrate the skills and knowledge obtained when carrying out their own field work investigations. Although most centres had ensured that the work was geographically relevant, there were several centres that relied on a factory visit where processes such as milk bottling were observed by the candidates. The data collection techniques tended to be limited to observation and asking some generalized questions. The candidates were consequently limited when describing aims, data collection and summarizing conclusions. Centres are again referred to suggestions for field work in the Teacher's Guide.

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Paper 04

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The coursework option attracted a relatively small entry as most candidates were entered for the written alternative, Paper 3.

Administration

All of the work was submitted in simple light weight folders, without the use of plastic wallets, which greatly assisted the moderation process.

Some aspects of the submitted work were accurately marked. However, there was a tendency for centres to be overgenerous or inconsistent with some criteria, and in these cases there was some adjustment in the candidates' marks.

In some cases, centres used the Individual Candidate Record Sheets intended for GCSE Geography rather than IGCSE. This led to marks being altered for all criteria, and meant that the candidates work was not always focused.

Candidates' performance

General Comments

The choices of topic were all geographically relevant and there were some pleasing examples of candidates being encouraged to select topics which they found especially interesting. However, some candidates investigated very extensive geographical areas or questions and consequently were challenged by the amount of data collected.

Criterion 1 - Introduction and aims

As stated in previous reports, it is essential that candidates have a clear aim; develop questions or hypotheses relating to their coursework. A number of carefully designed studies failed to include an outline of proposed data collection, thus limiting attainment for this criterion. However, studies were generally well located and there a number of detailed annotated location maps.

Criterion 2 - Data collection

Much of the submitted work had a strong emphasis on secondary data collection, and consequently candidates were limited in the variety of data collection methods. However, methods used to collect information tended to be clearly described. Data collection methods were only justified by a few candidates and consequently a number of pieces of work failed to reach Level 3.

Criterion 3- Data presentation

Candidates used a wide variety of data presentation techniques. These included some excellent digital photographs and well constructed maps, graphs and tables. Candidates demonstrated considerable proficiency in ICT.

Photographs require annotations and incorporating into the text in is an effective method of data presentation and candidates should attempt to extend graphing techniques beyond rather basic pie charts and bar graphs, perhaps including located graphs and annotated photographs on base maps. Very few candidates attempted to justify their selected methods.

Criterion 4 - Analysis and Conclusions

Most candidates were able to comment on their data to some extent. The lack of quantitative discussion prevented a number of candidates from reaching the higher levels for this criterion.

Most candidates were able to offer some concluding comments; the more focused candidates linked such comments to their original hypothesis or question.

Limitations were frequently noted and valid suggestions for improvement, but most candidates tended to limit these to extending the number of questionnaires. Candidates failed to question the validity of their conclusions.

Criterion 5 - Planning and Organisation

The majority of work was logically organised, and there was an extremely high standard of presentation. The stronger studies integrated maps and diagrams into the text. All candidates acknowledged sources of secondary data, including maps, books and websites. Some extremely proficient use of ICT enhanced all the submitted studies.

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Statistics November 2007

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grading option 1: 03 Written Alternative
1F Written Paper

Grade	Max. Mark	C	D	E	F	G
Overall Subject Grade Boundaries		51	44	38	32	26

Grading Option 3: 03 Written Alternative
2H Written Paper

Grade	Max. Mark	*	A	B	C	D	E
Overall Subject Grade Boundaries		69	61	53	45	37	33

Grading Option 4: 04 Coursework
2H Written Paper

Grade	Max. Mark	*	A	B	C	D	E
Overall Subject Grade Boundaries		68	60	52	44	36	32

Grades per paper

Grade	Max. Mark	*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Overall Subject Grade Boundaries	03	60		46		36	30		18
	04	60		44		33	27		15
	1F	110				54			36
	2H	150		86		62	51		

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