

Examiners' Report Summer 2010

IGCSE

IGCSE Geography 4370 Paper 3

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General comments

The skills based paper, offered as a written alternative to coursework, was once again well received by both centre and candidates. As in the past the majority of the cohort was entered for Paper 3, which is common to both Foundation and Higher tiers. The majority of candidates were able to demonstrate a wide range of geographical skills. All candidates were able to complete the paper with in the allocated time

The paper proved to be accessible to the foundation candidates whilst those entered for the higher tier were able to achieve high marks. The majority of candidates were very well prepared for questions one and two, but there remain a number of centres and candidates who select topics with little geographical relevance for question three and consequently limited their attainment in this section.

Questions one and two

Both these questions required the candidates to use a variety of resources and geographical skills. The candidates appeared to find both these questions equally accessible; however there was some considerable variation in the quality of the answers between the subsections of each question.

Question one

1a. This section was generally answered very well. The majority of candidates were able to accurately complete the graph. The candidates recognised changes between the two population pyramids and many used data to support their answer. The following is an extract from a response that gained a high level two mark;

‘Between 1990 and 2005 there has been an increase in Qatar’s population. Since 1990 the number of men in certain age groups has more than trebled (e.g. men aged 45-49)especially compared to the relatively small increase in the female population.’

1b Generally this question was answered well. Nearly all candidates recognised the development of Pearl-Qatar as a tourist destination and the economic benefits that this brought. A number of candidates also recognised the role of Pearl-Qatar in reducing population pressures elsewhere. It was evident that, in many cases, candidates were using the information provided in 1(c) to help them with their answer. The following extract illustrates how a candidate effectively expanded on the material provided;

‘Also the luxury homes will be attracting people to go and live there, possibly to decrease the population density in Doha and so decrease the pressure on Doha’s resources.’

1cii) This section tended to provide the lowest scoring responses to question3. Nearly all candidates made a statement about whether they agreed or not with the student’s conclusions but few reasons were given. Many candidates lifted statistics from the questionnaire results but simply listed these as evidence to support their ideas. There were, however, a number of candidates that used information from the questionnaire and other sources, most notably the image in 1b. A few candidates noticed the limitations of the questionnaire or the methods used to obtain the information, and these candidates were usually able to reach the highest levels;

‘90% of the people surveyed said that the Pearl-Qatar would be a popular tourist attractionthe primary data lacked reliability as he has only asked 20 people what they thought, in one area and on one day, which does not provide the true opinions of the public.’

Question two

Generally, this question was answered very well and gained similar marks to question one. In section 2b, the answers given for boxes 1 and 2 were the strongest. The majority of candidates provided developed points surrounding the steepness of the land (box 1) and the presence of housing and increased surface run off (box 2.) Box 4 was not answered with the same confidence. A few candidates identified the bridge; some identified the feature as a dam. The main issue seemed to be providing an idea about how the feature would contribute to flooding. The following answer is a rare example of the candidate linking the cause and the effect of partly blocking the river's flow;

'The bridge blocks the main waterway of the river and the water can not access the surrounding land, which makes it more likely to burst its banks.'

The majority of candidate were able to produce neat and accurate graphs (Question 2c (i)) There were some excellent descriptions of the graphs, and most candidates were able to comment on the links between the rainfall graph and the hydrograph. Fewer candidates attempted to explain the link, however, and consequently did not reach the highest level. Those that did attempt an explanation produced some superb answers;

'.....the peak discharge was seen just after half a day after the peak rainfall, perhaps due to the surface run-off and delayed time as the water infiltrates through the soil, and into the ground water to reach the river.'

Question three

A range of aims were given in section (a). The most appropriate geographical pieces of fieldwork were frequently related to river studies which also tended to produce the most focused answers considering the gradients of rivers, features of rivers or the velocity of rivers. Unfortunately, there were a few candidates which did not identify aims which were appropriate or geographical, or which extremely general 'to look at a river' or 'to explain shopping.' Those answers which provided weak aims tended to have weak answers throughout Q3.

bi) Whilst the majority of candidates were able to answer this question to some extent, many candidates simply wrote about their data collection methods than rather describe the data they were actually collecting. However, there were very detailed descriptions of how they collected data such as river speeds, gradients, traffic counts and environmental surveys that referred back to the aims given in section (a).

bii) This section provided the most variation in the quality of answers. The majority candidates recognised the benefits of repeating data collection, comparing to other data sets and ensuring careful data collection.

'This was done by all 4 members of for all 4 of the regions, then the average score for each region was taken and written by all the team members as a team score.'

Significantly fewer candidates showed a good understanding of sampling. Those that did mention sampling tended to identify random sampling as a way to reduce bias. However, there were examples of candidates simply stating 'random sampling' without clarification, and similarly some candidates mentioned stratified sampling without any indication that they understood the processes involved or the reasons for carrying out a sampling technique.

ci) While the majority of candidates were able to draw a simple bar graph, pie chart or other relevant method of data presentation, very few candidates provided labels or gave their diagrams a title of any kind.

ii) This was answered very well with a large proportion of candidates identifying a range of advantages of their data presentation methods. The most common responses related to the easy construction of the graph/chart or how easy it was to understand the data it presented. A large number also recognised that some forms of data presentation, such as located graphs, allowed the comparison of relative data sets.

d). Many candidates just described some additional data they might collect or an alternative way this could be collected. However, some candidates were able to recognise the limitations in their investigation and suggest how they might improve it by taking further measurements of data, including a larger sample or a greater variety of sites.

'We could have sampled more than two roads, so there was a better representation of the town, this would be fairer and more accurate, and would increase the validity of out field work.'

Statistics

Paper 1F & 03

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
grade boundaries	100	N/A	N/A	N/A	44	38	32	29	20	0

Paper 2H & 03

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
grade boundaries	100	66	57	48	39	33	30	N/A	N/A	0

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