

Examiners' Report Summer 2010

IGCSE

IGCSE Geography 4370 Paper 04

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Unit 4370 Paper 4 Coursework

Introduction

The coursework option, paper 4, attracted an entry of approximately one quarter of the total candidates. Entries were received from both higher and foundation tier candidates.

Administration

There were very few administrative errors on behalf of the centres, who to be thanked for greatly assisting the moderation process.

The majority of work was submitted in simple light weight folders which again assisted with moderation.

As in the past, many aspects of the submitted work were accurately marked. However, there were some instances of centres being over-generous and this resulted in some significant adjustment of their candidates' marks.

A number of centres most helpfully provided detailed annotations or provided separate comments which helped to clarify the reasons for the mark allocation.

General Comments

The choice of topics, in general, was both geographically relevant and related to the specification. However, the topics selected by some centres proved very demanding in terms of the amount of data required and proved over-challenging to the candidates. Many of the candidates concerned relied almost entirely on secondary data obtained from the internet and therefore produced a report as opposed to a piece of authentic coursework. This resulted in the severe limitation of the marks which could be justifiably awarded for each criterion.

Centres should consider the personal safety of their candidates when selecting topics for investigations, this is particularly true of some river studies that required the candidates to swim or wade across wide and deep areas of fast flowing water.

Criterion 1 - Introduction and aims

Nearly all candidates stated one or more clear aims for their investigation, a pleasing improvement on some of the less focused studies submitted in previous series. A number of candidates also developed a number of sub-aims which allowed them to develop their investigations.

The candidates that relied on collecting secondary data usually supplied one aim for their investigation, and were unable to develop this beyond a single sentence.

The majority of submitted studies were clearly located using maps, aerial photographs and satellite photographs. GIS was effectively used by an increased number of candidates in this series. As in the past, opportunities exist to use these locations more effectively, for example by the addition of annotations to show the actual location sites so that the work becomes more focused on the area concerned.

Criterion 2 - Data collection

most of the submitted work placed a strong emphasis on primary data collection. Candidates who had provided a series of sub-aims and who had developed a sequence of data collection as part of Criterion 1 usually gained higher marks for this section. In instances where some secondary resources were used candidates were frequently able to justify their reasons for including the information and for using this method of obtaining information.

Candidates who relied wholly on secondary data found it difficult to extend the data collection comments beyond stating which internet sites and/or other resources they had used.

A number of candidates used sampling techniques when collecting their data. There were some excellent examples of candidates being aware of and understanding sampling strategies, for example;

'I threw it over my shoulder because I wanted the results to be fair- if I threw the quadrant with aim I could bias my answers to those I wanted.'

A small number of candidates used a very limited range of one or two data collection techniques (such as interviews or questionnaires) which consequently provided a somewhat limited amount of data. Where a limited number of data collection techniques were described the marks for this criterion were frequently had to be adjusted as part of the moderation process.

Criterion 3- Data presentation

As previously, some candidates demonstrated great proficiency with a range of data presentation techniques, and many showed competence when using ICT packages. many candidates included both field sketches and/or photographs that were clearly annotated to explain the selection and location of sites in addition to the main relevant factors illustrated. These diagrams were frequently of exceptional quality.

However, centres are requested to note that studies containing basic data presentation methods such as bar charts, pie charts and photographs which may be simply labeled and which lack some detailed annotations should not be awarded higher than level one/level two for this criterion. Some centres' marks were very over-generous and considerable adjustment had to take place at moderation.

Criterion 4 - Analysis and Conclusions.

All the candidates were able to offer some concluding comments, the best of which returned the original aims and questions of the investigation. In the cases where the candidates relied on secondary data, the conclusion usually consisted of a single statement.

However, the analysis was often limited to descriptive comments, and therefore did not reach the highest level for this criterion. Candidates need to be encouraged to analyse as well as explain any trends that are evident in their collected information. Where the centres awarded high levels for brief outlines of the data and did not provide detailed conclusions, the marks were adjusted. This was normally true of the centres where the candidates relied on secondary evidence.

Nearly all the pieces of submitted work contained evaluations, normally the candidates recognised that the submitted work presented limitations, and most were able to suggest some methods of improvement;

'I think I should have taken my people count at two different times during the day in this way I would be able to see the ratio of tourists to local people.'

Comments such as that given above would be greatly improved if the candidate had considered how the extra data suggested might support the validity of the conclusions previously made.

Criterion 5 - Planning and Organisation

All the submitted work was well organized, and the majority of candidates attained at least Level 2 for this criterion. The most effective studies included diagrams and graphs that were integrated into the text, even if this was sometimes briefly mentioned.

Better candidates crossed referenced to their diagrams;

'Graphs 4 and 4b, the overall pattern shown by both these graphs is that there is a major variation in environmental quality between the sites.'

Candidate normally acknowledged sources of secondary data, including maps, books and websites.

most centres made effective use of ICT to enhance studies. Hand written annotations and labels were easy to read. Over all, the submitted work was extremely well presented.

Statistics

Paper 1F & 04

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
grade boundaries	100	N/A	N/A	N/A	43	37	31	25	19	0

Paper 2H & 04

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	U
grade boundaries	100	67	57	47	38	32	29	N/A	N/A	0

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