



Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2024

Pearson Edexcel International Advanced Level
In Geography (WGE02)

Paper 01: Geographical Investigations

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Introduction

This report is about the June 2024 series for assessment of WGE02: Geographical Investigations.

Most candidates completed all questions, but some wrote overlong answers for 1- or 2-mark questions. Fewer made mistakes on questions 3c and 3d, instead writing about the correct part of the route to enquiry, and overall marks achieved were slightly higher. Overall, Q5 (Investigating Urban Problems, Planning and Regeneration) was slightly more popular than Q4 (Investigating Crowded Coasts) for this series.

Reports on Individual Questions

Question 1ai

Most candidates were unable to identify the delta features shown on Figure 1. 'Islands' was the most commonly seen correct answer for Label A, with 'salt marsh' and 'sand bank' also being seen frequently.

For Label B, the correct answer was 'Distributary', which very few candidates were able to identify.

A question that asks about a delta will not award a mark for identifying the feature as a 'delta'.

Question 1aii

Relatively few candidates were able to recognise that deltas are formed by depositional processes. Many answers displayed misconceptions as they discussed marine erosion, weathering and coastal transportation processes.

The best answers discussed the slowing of river flow, reducing the competence of the river in carrying its load, leading to deposition. Flocculation was also referred to by a few.

Question 1b

The two 8-mark essays are designed to be broad and allow for candidates to examine the themes and bring their own interpretations. This essay title allowed for a straightforward essay structure which examined the costs and benefits of coastal land reclamation and the building of artificial islands. There was an intended overlap in these two settings, and many candidates made points that were applicable to both, with exemplification from either or both contexts. This was fully acceptable.

Most frequently seen were environmental costs, and both economic costs and benefits. To reach level 3 some discussion of which outweighed the other or the relative importance of the factors in the examples used was useful.

Overall, there was limited use of case study examples. This is one route to a higher mark, as this could provide the 'detailed and fully developed' material needed for high level 2 or level 3.

Another route to Level 3 was to examine the ways these costs and benefits impact on decision makers, who may well need to take other factors into consideration as well. Some discussed the value of the land, the wider issues of water availability and the long term impacts on the environment.

Candidates should be encouraged to use examples to support their ideas about each of the topics in this part of the specification. These give the specific context for the economic,

environmental and social costs and benefits for people living and working in these places, as well as for the environments involved. Any examples used should link clearly with the question and contain specific information to secure top band marks.

Question 2ai

Most were able to score 2 marks here for sources of pollution shown in the photograph. The most usual reason for failing to score marks was when candidates identified types of pollution such as carbon dioxide, rather than naming a source of pollution. Here, vehicles and factories were the most commonly given answers.

Note that the command word for this question is 'identify' so a single word or a few words are sufficient, and a lengthy answer which repeats the question is a waste of time in this examination where some candidates find they experience time.

Question 2aii

This was a well answered question with most responses being related to planning solutions involving low emission zones, renewable energy alternatives, public transport and EVs. Most but not all answers were about transport. Any solution that was urban in focus was acceptable.

Question 2b

This question on the success of planned 'ideal' new towns and cities was answered reasonably well, with most achieving at least mid-marks. A variety of international examples were used, and some excellent answers were seen. However, other lower scoring candidates had misconceptions, and wrote about generalised regeneration projects, instead of focusing on 'ideal' planned new towns.

Successful answers discussed Tung Chung in Hong Kong, Xiong'an in Hebei province, China, Curitiba in Brazil, and the Olympic Village in London. Some of these were distracts rather than cities, but they were acceptable.

The best answers assessed success by considering which groups of people benefited, and the extent to which social and environmental problems were reduced. Many discussed housing, education, transport and access to health care, as well as availability of water and sanitation and the environmental impacts on land, habitats and water courses. Many also considered the limitations of the success plans, as for example, many people aspired to car ownership in these towns and cities, even when public transport was available, or for example, when government departments refused to move to new sites.

Question 3 is the 'familiar fieldwork' section where candidates are asked to write about fieldwork they have carried out. Each sub-question is likely to be taken from a different section of the 'Geographical investigation process', as outlined in Appendix 8 of the specification.

Question 3a

Most scored at least one mark here, though a few were unsure about what the question asked. Centres should help candidates understand how ideas, models and theories underpin our investigations and are often the starting point in the process.

Some candidates had been well prepared for this, and scored at least 2/3 here, as they made a good attempt at explaining a sensible theory or a sound concept relevant to their investigation.

Ideas did not need to be complex, for example that there is a relationship between level of traffic and air pollution, or investigating the aims of a regeneration project, or applying the Butler model to a location.

Question 3b

Most answers about the suitability of the location related to accessibility, safety and characteristics of the location associated with their investigation. Most students were able to access at least 2 marks. This was not a 'one reason' question, so more than one idea could be explored. Another route was to discuss the choice of a location to test an idea already researched by others either in the place itself or to make a comparison.

Question 3c

There was some confusion between presentation and analysis, and of course the one often leads to the other. Here the main focus had to be on analysis as there were only 6 marks and 12 lines available, which indicated the suggested maximum length of the answer.

Those who were able to explain suitable analysis techniques accurately were able to score 5-6 marks. There were sound ideas about statistical analysis and spreadsheets, with details about the value of scatter graphs in establishing whether there was a relationship between two sets of data. Some explained about the use of Spearman's rank to measure the strength and direction of a relationship, and discussed the value of means and inter-quartile ranges in looking for trends and patterns, as well as exceptions. Some candidates explained about their use of photos that were annotated to explain key features. Some used photos to make contrasts with past images from secondary sources or used a map showing deprivation to show their locations and data findings, which enabled them to synthesise different data sets. Some wrote about the use of mobile devices to process data, or to locate photos, helping improve the accuracy of their analysis through their measurements and records.

Question 3d

Candidates seemed to have prepared well for this question about the success of their primary data collection methods, and it was generally well-answered. A sizeable number achieved Level 3. To score higher marks, candidates needed to evaluate the methods they used, perhaps considering which method was the most successful and why, and also ensure that they made links to their research question. They could also evaluate the reasons methods were unsuccessful.

Some students drifted into writing about secondary data and focused too much on fieldwork design and their sampling framework, rather than the primary data collection methods themselves.

Question 4a and 5a

i) Two separate problems with the data presentation method were asked for. Most students were able to identify the lack of labelling on the Y axis, and the layout of the line graph which made it difficult to read, and indeed that it was inappropriate for the data. Some failed to earn a second mark if they merely repeated the same point.

ii) Good answers identified that this was discrete data, so a line graph was an inappropriate method for presentation. Some commented that the opinions of two sets of people could be compared by using separate bars for each.

iii) Some answers explained that the sample size and the balance between numbers of visitors and locals interviewed led to more reliable data. However, a few students were not able to interpret the question about 'sampling procedure' correctly.

Question 4b and 5b

- i) This straightforward calculation was successfully answered by almost all candidates.
- ii) This question was also well answered, but there were slightly more errors than with i).

Question 4c and 5c

The final question required candidates to consider how GIS could be used in this fieldwork investigation. If students knew what GIS was, this answer was generally well answered. However, occasionally students appeared confused between GIS and a spreadsheet. Most candidate understood GIS and could make a sound attempt at the question. Many spoke about Google Maps and how it could be used to create overlays and its utility in analysing multiple data sets.

