



Examiners' Report Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2025

Pearson Edexcel International Advanced Level
In Geography (WGE04)
Paper 01 Geographical Research

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OPTION 1: Tectonic Activity and Hazards

'Trends in impacts show that tectonic disaster management is increasingly successful.' To what extent do you agree?

OPTION 2: Feeding the World's People

'Poverty is the most significant cause of food insecurity in both developing and developed countries.' Discuss.

OPTION 3: Cultural Diversity: People and Landscapes

Migration is the most important factor influencing the cultural diversity of places.' Discuss

OPTION 4: Human Health and Disease

To what extent are geographical features and pathways the most important cause of risks to human health

Overview

This year's examination saw a strong dominance of Option 1: Tectonic Disaster Management, attracting the largest candidate cohort by a significant margin. Options 2, 3, and 4 had notably smaller entries but demonstrated solid engagement.

Candidate responses revealed two main issues. Firstly, some candidates still struggle to present their work as a report rather than an essay, despite clear guidance in the mark schemes. Many responses across all options lacked subheadings and clear structure, limiting marks in the 'introduction' and 'quality of written communication' sections. Secondly, candidates found it difficult to clearly separate their 'research' and 'analysis' sections. It is important to remind candidates and centres that this is a report-based exam, and following the generic mark scheme is essential.

That said, there was noticeable improvement in report writing and structured argument presentation across all options. Persistent challenges remain, however, in maintaining focus on the question, developing thorough evaluations, and consistently referencing sources.

Introduction (5 marks)

For this series, the strongest introductions demonstrated a clear deconstruction of the question by focusing on key phrases such as "most significant cause." High-scoring candidates effectively established the scope and focus of their reports by explicitly linking these terms to the central argument. A sound approach involved distinguishing between different causes and their relative significance, which then allowed for a more nuanced exploration of the topic. Conversely, weaker introductions tended to be vague or overly descriptive, often providing definitions without clearly addressing how these relate to the question's core contention.

Research (15 marks)

The research requirements for each option varied in scope and depth, with Option 1 featuring the broadest and most current range of case studies, including Iceland, Haiti, Turkey, and Japan. Candidates who effectively linked their case studies to relevant geographical models and theories generally achieved higher marks. Research across options was mostly accurate and factual, demonstrating a solid conceptual understanding supported by appropriate evidence. The use of maps and diagrams was a common strength, enhancing explanations and positively impacting candidates' scores, with most earning between 8 and 14 marks.

In Option 2, research tended to focus heavily on poverty as a cause of food insecurity but often lacked consideration of other significant factors such as climate or political instability, limiting the breadth of analysis. Option 3 was predominantly case study based, with strong examples drawn from Australia, Iceland, and Japan that effectively illustrated migration's impact on cultural diversity. Meanwhile, research in Option 4 was often descriptive, with limited critical evaluation of the relative importance of geographical influences compared to other health risk factors. The most effective integration of theories and models was seen in Option 1, suggesting that other options could benefit from a broader application of theoretical frameworks to deepen their analyses.

Analysis (20 marks)

The analysis section carried the greatest weight, and the strongest reports were clearly structured with a consistent focus on the question. In Option 1, despite solid research, many candidates struggled to analyse trends in disaster impacts that would demonstrate increasing success in management. Answers often focused on death tolls and economic losses but failed to link these trends to improvements in hazard management. Critical evaluation of factors influencing these trends, such as better reporting or population growth, was frequently missing. While maps and diagrams were used, candidates seldom connected these visuals to the effectiveness of disaster management.

For Option 2, candidates effectively argued poverty's role in food insecurity, but many did not fully engage with other contributing factors, resulting in less balanced evaluations. Option 3 analysis was predominantly case study driven, illustrating migration's effects on cultural diversity well; however, there was limited critical discussion of alternative influences or the importance of migration types. Option 4 candidates tended to describe geographical factors without sufficiently debating their significance relative to social or economic causes of health risks. Overall, the best analyses showed critical engagement with the question, effectively debating different perspectives rather than simply describing facts.

Conclusion and Evaluation (15 marks)

As in previous years, the conclusion section remained the weakest part of many reports. Most candidates attempted to conclude their work, with stronger responses offering ongoing evaluative judgments that linked directly to the question's contention. In Option 1, the best conclusions provided thoughtful assessments, but many were brief or lacked depth, often due to time constraints. Critical evaluation of source reliability and discussion of limitations were rarely included. For other options, conclusions tended to restate earlier points without synthesizing the analysis or offering critical insight. Greater use of evaluation and

consideration of counterarguments would enhance these sections and provide more convincing final judgments.

Quality of Written Communication (5 marks)

Many candidates effectively used the prerelease materials, helping them score well in the research section; however, inconsistent or inadequate sourcing limited their marks in the Quality of Written Communication (QOWC) section. The strongest evaluations were often presented clearly in methods tables, with sources that directly supported the question's focus. Yet, some candidates spent excessive time on this part, sacrificing higher-credit sections like conclusions and evaluations. While report writing and clarity improved across all options, especially Option 1, referencing remained inconsistent, with many reports lacking clear citations, restricting marks to 2 or 3 out of 5.

Summary of Key Areas for Improvement

- Focus on question specifics: Addressing key terms such as 'trends' (Option 1), 'most significant/important' (Options 2–4) with precision.
- Enhanced analysis and evaluation: Critically assess evidence and consider alternative explanations, especially in conclusions.
- Broader research: Expand case study variety and perspectives, particularly for Options 2, 3, and 4.
- Consistent referencing: Proper sourcing to support credibility and meet assessment criteria.

Summary

Many candidates demonstrated strong research skills and report-writing improvements, especially in Option 1, but struggled to fully focus their responses on the question's contention. Common issues included weak introductions, difficulty distinguishing between research and analysis, and underdeveloped conclusions with limited evaluation. Inconsistent referencing also restricted marks in written communication. To improve, candidates and centres should emphasize clear report structure, critical engagement with the question, thorough evaluation, consistent sourcing, and effective time management to ensure all sections receive adequate attention.

