Examiners' Report
Principal Examiner Feedback

November 2023

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE
In Geography (4GE1)
Paper 01: Physical Geography

Edexcel and BTEC Qualifications

Edexcel and BTEC qualifications are awarded by Pearson, the UK's largest awarding body. We provide a wide range of qualifications including academic, vocational, occupational and specific programmes for employers. For further information visit our qualifications websites at www.edexcel.com or www.btec.co.uk. Alternatively, you can get in touch with us using the details on our contact us page at www.edexcel.com/contactus.

Pearson: helping people progress, everywhere

Pearson aspires to be the world's leading learning company. Our aim is to help everyone progress in their lives through education. We believe in every kind of learning, for all kinds of people, wherever they are in the world. We've been involved in education for over 150 years, and by working across 70 countries, in 100 languages, we have built an international reputation for our commitment to high standards and raising achievement through innovation in education. Find out more about how we can help you and your students at: www.pearson.com/uk

November 2023
Publications Code 4GE1_01_ER_2311

Principle Examiner Report

International GCSE Geography

Paper 1

4GE1_01

November 2023

There was a small entry for this exam series likely due to this being the first November series for this qualification.

This paper consists of two sections from which candidates answer two 25-mark questions from Section A and one 20 mark question from Section B, the total marks on the paper are 70.

The exam includes multiple-choice questions, short, open response, calculations and extended response questions. The exam command words which are used in the paper are defined in the specification. Each of the questions is mapped to one or more of the Assessment Objectives (AOs).

In section A River environments, Coastal environments and Hazardous environments are covered. Candidates are required to select two out of three questions.

In section B candidates choose one out of three fieldwork related questions relating to river environments, coastal environments and hazardous environments.

This brief report comments on the overall quality of responses and highlights common errors observed across this paper. Whilst, the paper is considered to be accessible it was apparent that candidates found the level of demand challenging.

Common errors seen in candidate responses on this paper were:

- Candidates often misunderstood key geographical terminology in the question stem for example confusing prediction with prevention and hazard with impact.
- Candidates struggled to go beyond stating a factor when asked to explain and were unable to demonstrate explanatory chains particularly in the 'explain one…' questions across the paper.
- Candidates responses to familiar fieldwork questions were often low scoring whilst they were able to engage with the resources for the unfamiliar extended response question this was frequently limited to level 1 standard.
- The 8-mark responses, in Section A, demonstrated little evidence of meeting the 'analyse' command with the majority of candidates simply describing what was shown in the resource. Candidates were often unable to demonstrate a depth or breadth of geographical knowledge and understanding.

Recommendations for centres:

- Centres need to ensure candidates are familiar with key geographical vocabulary used in the qualification specification and the nuances between different key terms to ensure student responses are focused on the question stated.
- Centres need to ensure candidates are familiar with the demands of different command words in this specification.
- Centres need to ensure candidates are familiar with the different stages of the geographical enquiry.
- In questions where candidates are asked to develop a single reason, it is important to ensure that the appropriate number of links in the explanatory chain are developed. The number of marks should be used as a guide. These questions usually have the command word, 'suggest' or 'explain', but may differ in depth depending on the expectation of the question. For example, a 4-mark, 'explain one reason why…' question requires greater depth than a 4-mark, 'explain two reasons for…' question.
- Candidates who just lift text directly from a resource will not gain credit.
- Where resources are provided candidates need to use evidence in their responses to demonstrate they have engaged with the information provided.

Question Feedback

1a This MCQ was an accessible start to the question with a significant majority of candidates being able to identify data shown on a hydrograph.

1bi The majority of candidates were able to identify the definition of water abstraction.

1bii The majority of candidates were able to state a reason why the hydrological cycle is a closed system.

1biii This is an example where candidates struggled to show the required depth of knowledge often only achieving one mark for stating a change downstream but no explanation for why the change occurs was provided. A proportion of students demonstrated the common misconception that velocity decreases downstream as the land is flatter.

1c This question required candidates to engage with a resource showing different water uses in developed and emerging/developing countries. Candidate responses were strong on this question often identifying a difference shown on the resource and developing this point to suggest a plausible reason for the difference.

1d The resource for this question showed a drainage basin with a label asking candidates to identify the watershed. The majority of candidates found this question a

challenge emphasising the importance of having a strong understanding of geographical key terms.

1e Many candidates failed to take note of the word 'physical' in the question stem resulting in their responses being human focused for which there was no credit awarded as candidates were required to explain two physical factors that affect river discharge.

1f This question asked candidates to explain one way to predict river flooding. Candidate responses often focused on a prevention strategy rather than a prediction strategy resulting in 0 marks being awarded.

1g This 8-mark question provided a resource showing information about China's south-north water transfer project to support them in analysing different impacts of managing water supply. Most candidates were using the resource in their response but often in a very basic way doing little more than listing the impacts shown in the resource. There was very minimal evidence of candidates attempting to meet the command word 'analyse' and the development of points was often very basic.

2a The majority of candidates were able to identify the correct definition for the term swash, making this MCQ an accessible introduction to the coastal environments question.

2bi This MCQ question required candidates to identify the best definition of mass movement which was more of a challenge despite it being a named process in the specification.

2bii This question was answered correctly by the majority of candidates as they identified a landform caused by erosion. Where candidates did not gain credit it was often as they gave beach as their response.

2biii This question focused on the influence of geology on rates of coastal erosion, candidates found this a challenge often overlooking the word 'geology' in the question stem and explaining the different type of waves (destructive) or strength of wind on rates of erosion resulting in 0 marks being awarded.

2c This question required candidates to use a resource showing an image of a coastline before and after managed retreat and explain one advantage and one disadvantage of this coastal management. Most candidates were able to use the resource to identify an advantage and disadvantage but fewer were able to develop to gain the second mark available. Some candidates made suggestions which were not plausible from the resource provided and were not awarded credit.

2d These questions required the development of one idea which many candidates found a challenge, although this question asked for one way education can reduce the impact of coastal flooding many candidates gave response strategies not linked in any way to education.

2e Candidates were presented with a photograph of a sand dune and asked to identify the ecosystem, many candidates were able to correctly identify the dune. Candidates who were not awarded the mark stated 'beach' as their response.

2f Candidates scored highly in this question demonstrating a clear knowledge of the reasons why coral reefs are under threat.

2g This 8-mark question provided a resource showing information about rates of mangrove destruction for selected countries. Most candidates were using the resource in their response but often in a very basic way doing little more than describing the segments in each pie chart. There was very minimal evidence of candidates attempting to meet the command word 'analyse' and the development of points was often very basic if present at all.

3a This was an accessible start to the hazardous environments question with the majority of candidates being able to identify the feature of an earthquake in this MCQ.

3bi This MCQ was more of a challenge for candidates when asked to identify the best definition of Coriolis force.

3bii Most candidates were able to correctly state an impact from a volcanic eruption. Where candidates were not awarded a mark they often stated a hazard rather than an impact.

3biii This question required the development of one idea which many candidates found a challenge, although this question asked for one way risk assessments can be used to manage earthquake hazards few candidates achieved full marks as their points were not explicitly linked to the role of a risk assessment in reducing the risk.

3c The focus of this question was explaining one of the ways earthquakes can be measured, whilst the majority of candidates could identify one of the earthquake scales few were able to develop this sufficiently to achieve 3 marks.

3d Candidates were shown a diagram of a tropical cyclone and required to explain two characteristics whilst many were able to identify a characteristic far fewer were able to explain why tropical cyclones have this feature preventing many from accessing 4 marks.

3e An image of a volcano was shown in the resource with a arrow pointing to a feature candidates were required to identify, it would be expected that candidates know the features of a volcanoes structure but few were able to use the correct key term 'crater'.

3f This question asked candidates to explain one physical and one social factor which increases a country's vulnerability to tropical cyclones. The responses to this were variable, there was a clear misunderstanding of the term 'physical' with many candidates

stating/explaining economic or social factors, less often but still frequent candidates explained an economic factor rather than a social one.

3g This 8-mark question provided a resource showing information about different plate boundaries and some physical characteristics of selected earthquake and volcanic eruptions. Most candidates were using the resource in their response but often in a very basic way doing little more than identifying the plate boundary and listing what was shown in the textboxes. There was very minimal evidence of candidates attempting to meet the command word 'analyse' and the development of points was often very basic if present at all.

4/5/6a This question was focused on familiar fieldwork where candidates were asked to describe one of their data presentation techniques. Very few candidates were awarded marks often misinterpreting what is meant by 'data presentation technique'.

4/5/6b The focus for this question was explaining one limitation of a secondary data source used in their investigation. Most candidates were awarded some marks but few were able to development their point to a sufficient standard to gain 3 marks. No credit was awarded for identifying a secondary data source.

4/5/6c This question required candidates to explain two ways they could improve a primary data collection method to increase its accuracy, most candidates were awarded marks but few achieved 4 marks. On occasion this was a result of explaining a way which would improve reliability which was not credited. Candidates need to be clear on the differences between accurate and reliable.

4/5/6d This question required the development of one idea which many candidates found a challenge as they were required to identify a pattern they found in their data and then explain the reason for this pattern for the remaining two marks.

4/5/6e This 8-mark question provided a resource showing information about the students' investigation and required candidates to evaluate the reliability of the students' conclusion. Most candidates were using the resource in their response but often in a very basic way doing little more than describing the bar graphs and location of sites shown on the map. There was very minimal evidence of candidates attempting to meet the command word 'evaluate' and the development of points was often very limited with simplistic statements for example 'this makes is reliable'.

Pearson Education Limited. Registered company number 872828
with its registered office at 80 Strand, London, WC2R 0RL, United Kingdom