



Examiners' Report Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2024

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE
In Geography (4WGE1)
Paper 01: Physical Geography

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Introduction

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

This Examiner's report is intended to provide an insight into performance on Paper 1 Physical Geography analysing the majority of questions in terms of what went well and where common mistakes and underperformance were evident.

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.

It is important that candidates focus on the requirements for each command word and the Assessment Objective (AO) distribution, particularly for the longer response 8-mark questions, to ensure they access the full range of marks available.

Summary – Areas for focus for next series.

Based on their performance on this paper, candidates are offered the following advice:

- Ensure candidates make specific reference to the resource shown for 4-mark questions in Section A.
- Ensure candidates can explain the physical factors that influence fluvial and coastal processes.
- Ensure candidates can explain the influence of physical factors on vulnerability to natural hazards.
- When answering the 8-mark longer response questions candidates need to be clear on the demands of the command word 'analyse'. This requires candidates to investigate an issue by breaking it down into different components and making logical, evidence-based connections between these components. There is an expectation that judgement is made, although, this does not need to be in the form of an evaluation statement at the end of the response.
- Candidates need to recognise that the longer response 8-mark question is dominated by the AO distribution (4 marks for AO3 and 4 marks for AO4). Therefore, responses that are unbalanced or focus on one AO will be limited to a Level 1 response.

- Candidates also need to be aware that AO2 is not awarded on the longer response 8-mark questions, this means if using examples in their responses they need to show how these link to the stimulus material provided in the resource.
- Candidates who just lift text directly from a resource will not gain credit.
- 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.
- Candidates need to ensure they complete the correct fieldwork question, there were a number of candidates answering questions based on a coasts enquiry in both the river and hazard enquiry questions. This limited responses as marks could only be awarded for generic ideas plausible for the enquiry context being answered.
- Candidates need to be confident in explaining different stages in the geographical enquiry process not just fieldwork methods.
- Candidates need to be aware of the difference between risk and risk mitigation.
- Candidates need to know how to calculate all measures of central tendency.
- Candidates need to be confident in drawing lines of best fit.
- Candidates need to be confident in explaining relationships in data.

Question Feedback

1a

This MCQ was an accessible start to the question with a significant majority of candidates being able to identify the definition of evaporation.

1bi

This MCQ was an accessible start to the question with a significant majority of candidates being able to identify the definition of a river source.

1bii

Candidates accessed this question well and were able to state one human cause of river flooding. On rare occasions candidates stated a physical cause of river flooding. Also, some candidates provided responses which were too vague for credit for example: impermeable surfaces. This needed to be more specific to ensure they demonstrated they were not talking about rock/soil type but rather concrete/tarmac to accurately answer the question.

1biii

A significant proportion of candidates were able to achieve 2 marks on this question, however, on occasion some responses merely described the process of saltation rather than explain why the process occurs. Where confusion occurred, it was most often writing a response explaining traction, although, there were rare examples where candidates gave answers describing/explaining suspension and solution.

1c

This question required candidates to use a resource (figure 1a) showing an extract of an OS map of an upland area. The first mark was awarded for identification of a relevant piece of evidence with the second mark awarded for the reason for why this makes it an upland area.

A large proportion of candidates were able to achieve 4 marks, the most common responses were focused on contours linking to height and gradient, cliffs and boulders/loose rocks. Fewer candidates referred to waterfalls, river sources, river width shown on the map.

Some candidates did not select relevant evidence for example some referred to the recreational route, however, this is not a feature specific to upland areas and so was not awarded credit. The question required candidates to select evidence from the map, therefore, they needed to identify a feature shown rather than a feature not shown which meant references to 'not many buildings', 'not many roads' was not awarded credit.

1d

The vast majority of candidates achieved the mark for this question, a few candidates confused the feature with peak rainfall.

1e

This question required candidates to identify one strategy used to store water and one used to supply water and develop these to explain how the strategy works. Candidate responses were generally strong for this question, they are clearly aware of the difference between storage and supply with the most common responses being dams and pipelines.

Where candidates did not achieve full marks, this was most often because they found it a challenge to gain the development mark for the supply strategy part of the question.

1f

For this question candidates were required to explain one-way dams can affect river regimes. It is often these 3-mark questions which students find most demanding as they often find it challenging developing one point in sufficient depth to be awarded 3-marks. Most candidates were able to identify a correct impact dams have on rivers and the majority of these could explain a basic reason why this change occurs. Less candidates were awarded the third mark as they made a link to an impact on water quality, impact on the ecosystem (the most common was preventing fish from migrating upstream) rather than an impact on the river regime.

1g

These 8-mark extended writing questions candidates are required to blend their use of the resource (AO4) with their own knowledge and understanding of the issue presented (AO3), therefore they are not case study questions, rather they require the candidates to apply their geographical understanding to the context shown in the resource. Many candidates clearly used the resource to describe the areas of the world that have high water usage and often were able to link this to basic reasons, most often relating to the information provided in the textboxes.

Some candidates used the information from the resource and made links to the different reasons for variation in water usage for countries at different levels of development, for example making links to the types of lifestyle people in developed countries may have which would lead to high water usage.

To access the higher marks candidates needed to go beyond simply describing what is shown in the resources but provide several clear developed reasons for differences in water usage in different parts of the world. The command word 'analyse' needs to be addressed to achieve full marks and often candidates found this demanding as there was often minimal judgement demonstrated in candidate responses.

2a

This MCQ was an accessible start to the question with a significant majority of candidates being able to identify the abiotic characteristic of the coastal ecosystem.

2bi

This MCQ was an accessible start to the question with a significant majority of candidates being able to identify the definition of backwash.

2bii

In this question candidates were required to state one characteristic of a constructive wave. Candidates have a clear knowledge of the characteristics of waves and the majority of responses were awarded the mark. A minority of candidates confused the

strength of backwash/swash and stated either weak swash or strong backwash. A small number of candidates simply wrote swash, backwash which was too vague for credit.

2biii

In this question candidates were required to explain one type of coastal mass movement. Candidates were awarded for identifying a type of coastal mass movement and explaining the why this happens. Candidates were able to identify a correct type of mass movement, although some candidates did explain a different type of coastal process most often a type of weathering.

What candidates found challenging was to explain why the mass movement occurs, many responses stated a type of mass movement and then just described how the material moves down the slope rather than explaining why the sediment is moving downwards e.g. due to gravity.

2c

This question required candidates to use a resource, figure 2a, showing an extract of an OS map of an urbanised stretch of coastline. The first mark was awarded for identification of a relevant piece of evidence with the second mark awarded for the reason for why hard engineering would be suitable.

A large proportion of candidates were able to achieve 4 marks, they coped with the demands of the OS map effectively. The most common responses were focused on how many buildings were close to the coastline and the beach being used as a tourist attraction. The development mark was awarded for explaining why this is important for the area e.g. to boost economy.

There were examples of candidates who did not clearly use the resource for example by stating they last a long time with nothing used from the map. This meant these responses could only be awarded the AO2 credit and no AO3 credit.

2d

For this question candidates were required to explain one conflict that might occur between different user of a coastline. It is often these 3-mark questions which students find most demanding as they often find it challenging developing one point in sufficient depth to be awarded 3-marks. Most candidates were able to gain at least 2-marks by inferring a conflict between developers and conservationists without making the groups explicit. The better responses provided a specific group and explained their view and an opposing group and their view.

2e

The majority of students correctly identified the coastal landform shown was an arch.

2f

This item required candidates to explain two physical factors that affect weathering at coastlines. Candidates found this question challenging as they often confused erosion with weathering, often if a candidate had stated a type of weathering the development explained erosion (often referring to the influences of the waves).

2g

These 8-mark extended writing questions candidates are required to blend their use of the resource (AO4) with their own knowledge and understanding of the issue presented (AO3), therefore they are not case study questions, rather they require the candidates to apply their geographical understanding to the context shown in the resource.

In this instance candidates were required to study figure 2c, a map showing the number of people at risk from coastal flooding. There were three countries highlighted with facts about the annual expenditure on coastal protection, the percentage of people living in low-lying urban areas and the frequency of storm surges currently recorded in the 21st century.

Some candidates used the information from the resource and made links to the reasons why some of these countries are more or less at risk based on their level of development and their ability to plan, predict and respond to flooding. Some also made the link to latitude and its importance in relation to being exposed to tropical cyclones.

Few candidates were able to discuss the reasons for differences between different developing/emerging countries. Most responses compared the countries highlighted to developed countries, although this was not the intended focus of the question as almost all countries were colour-coded on the map this did enable candidates to be awarded both AO3 and AO4 credit.

To access the higher marks candidates needed to go beyond simply describing what is shown in the resources, but provide several clear developed reasons for differences in flood risk in different countries. The command word 'analyse' needs to be addressed to achieve full marks and often candidates found this demanding as there was often minimal judgement demonstrated in candidate responses.

3a

This MCQ was an accessible start to the question with a significant majority of candidates being able to identify the plate boundary where volcanoes do not form.

3bi

This MCQ was an accessible start to the question with a significant majority of candidates being able to identify the correct way to measure tropical cyclone intensity.

3bii

In this question candidates were required to state one characteristic of a tropical cyclone, the majority of candidates were awarded the mark. However, there were a number of responses where candidates demonstrated a misconception between a characteristic of the actual cyclone and a characteristic required for their formation. Responses about sea temperature, latitude, ocean depth were not awarded credit as they are factors required for formation not characteristics of the storm, for example the eye.

3biii

Candidates were required to explain one reason tropical cyclones lost their energy when they reach land. They were awarded one mark for identifying a factor and a second mark to explain why this leads to a loss of energy. As the fact the question stem contained the fact, they lose energy when they reach land candidates were not awarded credit for repeating this point. Most candidates made reference to the temperature of the water and the lack of evaporation when cyclones reach land. However, some responses incorrectly stated that the temperature decreases on land which is why they lose energy which is not necessarily correct as land heats up faster than water. A proportion of responses also stated that the cyclones lose their energy as the Coriolis force is weaker over land which is also not accurate and so was not awarded credit.

3c

For this question candidates were required to explain two reasons long-term planning for earthquakes may be more effective in some countries than others. Candidates coped well with the demands of this question and gave a range of responses which were awarded credit.

3d

Candidates were required to explain one physical factor that can make people more vulnerable to natural hazards.

It is often these 3-mark questions which students find most demanding as they often find it challenging developing one point in sufficient depth to be awarded 3-marks.

Where candidates stated a physical factor they were often awarded 3-marks as they were able to link this to why the impact would be more severe. However, a significant proportion of candidates stated an economic or social factor and therefore, were awarded zero marks. The most commonly used incorrect factor was population density with candidates often interpreting this as a physical factor.

3e

Most candidates were able to identify lava (flow) as the volcanic hazard shown in figure 3b. Credit was not awarded for magma (flow) or pyroclastic flow.

3f

This item required candidates to use figure 3a, which is a resource showing the global distribution of volcanos, to suggest two reasons for the distribution of volcanoes. Candidates need to be reminded that when they are provided with a resource, for these 4-mark resource questions, they need to use specific evidence from the resource to gain their AO3 credit. A significant proportion of responses demonstrated purely AO2 evidence as they did not contain any specific reference to something shown on the resource, this limited responses to 2-marks. To gain the AO3 credit responses needed to include located examples which could be identified on the map. To gain the AO2 credit responses needed to explain why volcano occurs not just describe the type of volcano or state that type of plate boundary.

3g

These 8-mark extended writing questions candidates are required to blend their use of the resource (AO4) with their own knowledge and understanding of the issue presented (AO3), therefore they are not case study questions, rather they require the candidates to apply their geographical understanding to the context shown in the resource. In this instance candidates were required to study figure 3c, a map showing the displacement of people and text and photographs of impacts from the volcanic eruption.

Candidates were able to access figure 3d and use information provided to explain the impacts of the eruption on people. Few candidates made use of the map showing the displacement of people which limited the depth of their response. Better responses used this map to begin to make links to the potential impacts.

The command word 'analyse' needs to be addressed to achieve full marks and many candidates found this challenging as there was often minimal judgement demonstrated in candidate responses as they often remained descriptive of the impacts.

34/5/6ai

This MCQ was an accessible start to the question with a significant majority of candidates being able to identify the piece of equipment used.

4/5/6 aii

Please note that the comments made on Q.4 also apply to Q.5 and Q.6 as the questions are in parallel and the resources very similar. Section B contained short answer questions on unfamiliar fieldwork and the extended 8-mark response on familiar fieldwork this series.

For this question candidates needed to identify a risk they might need to have prepared for which did not require them to state a mitigation strategy. The focus of the question was not how the risk was managed.

4/5/6 b

Please note that the comments made on Q.4 also apply to Q.5 and Q.6 as the questions are in parallel and the resources very similar. Section B contained questions on both familiar and unfamiliar contexts this series.

This item required candidates to calculate the range of the data shown in figure 4/5/6b. Responses needed to show the working by evidencing subtraction of the smallest from the largest in the data. The working out credit was only awarded if candidates correctly identified the correct highest and lowest numbers, as this is a vital skill in the calculation of the range.

Where candidates did not gain credit, it was because they often calculated the mean. Candidates need to ensure they read calculate questions in full to ensure they perform the correct calculation.

4/5/6 ci

Please note that the comments made on Q.4 also apply to Q.5 and Q.6 as the questions are in parallel and the resources very similar. Section B contained questions on both familiar and unfamiliar contexts this series.

Candidates were required to plot the two missing data plots onto figure 4/5/6c. There was less evidence of candidates missing out the graph question this series, but there was still evidence this had occurred as on occasion best fit lines were drawn with no data plots drawn, suggesting the candidate had overlooked this question.

4/5/6 cii

Please note that the comments made on Q.4 also apply to Q.5 and Q.6 as the questions are in parallel and the resources very similar. Section B contained questions on both familiar and unfamiliar contexts this series.

For this question candidates were required to draw a line of best fit onto figure 4/5/6c. Responses demonstrated less understanding of how to accurately draw a line of best fit with a considerable number of candidates leaving this question blank or turning the data plots into a line graph.

4/5/6 ciii

Please note that the comments made on Q.4 also apply to Q.5 and Q.6 as the questions are in parallel and the resources very similar. Section B contained questions on both familiar and unfamiliar contexts this series.

This question required candidates to suggest a reason for the relationship shown on figure 4/5/6c. The first mark was awarded for identifying a relationship and a second mark for explaining why the relationship occurs. Most responses were awarded 2-marks, however, some responses stated the relationship without offering any explanation resulting in only 1-mark being awarded.

4/5/6 d

Please note that the comments made on Q.4 also apply to Q.5 and Q.6 as the questions are in parallel and the resources very similar. Section B contained questions on both familiar and unfamiliar contexts this series.

For this question candidates were required to explain one other primary data collection method students might have found useful in their enquiry. Candidates were awarded one mark for identifying a variable/data collection method and up to 2 further marks for explaining why this method would help support the enquiry.

Some responses identified a data collection method but went on to describe how the data is collected rather than explain why this data would be useful in the wider context of the enquiry.

Some candidates wrote a response about one of the variables shown in either figure 4/5/6a or figure 4/5/6b, this meant they were awarded zero marks as the questions asked for 'one other' method.

4/5/6 e

Please note that the comments made on Q.4 also apply to Q.5 and Q.6 as the questions are in parallel and the resources very similar. Section B contained questions on both familiar and unfamiliar contexts this series.

It is important to remind candidates to write their responses under the correct enquiry context, a proportion of candidates wrote coastal enquiry responses in the river enquiry and hazardous environments enquiry questions. This limited their responses as only generic statements plausible to the enquiry context being answered could be credited.

There are also a small proportion of candidates who write tectonic responses for Q.6 and the specification is clear the enquiry needs to be focused on extreme weather events, this results in responses being awarded zero.

This question focuses on a familiar fieldwork context i.e., fieldwork that the candidates have undertaken as part of the course. This question asks candidates to evaluate the accuracy and reliability of their data collection methods used in their own geographical enquiry.

There were some excellent responses to this question showcasing some really interesting fieldwork, with the majority of responses being focused on data collection methods. However, a proportion of candidates struggled to evaluate both accuracy and reliability in their response. It would support candidates with their responses if they were clear on the difference between accuracy and reliability as they would be able to provide strong evaluations of their techniques.

Candidates are provided space to provide their geographical enquiry title. They do not receive marks for this, but it provides context for the response that follows.

To gain level 3 credit the command word 'evaluate' needs to be met which requires a concluding statement at the end of a response for full marks.

