

Examiners' Report

June 2011

OCR (Oxford Cambridge and RSA) is a leading UK awarding body, providing a wide range of qualifications to meet the needs of pupils of all ages and abilities. OCR qualifications include AS/A Levels, Diplomas, GCSEs, OCR Nationals, Functional Skills, Key Skills, Entry Level qualifications, NVQs and vocational qualifications in areas such as IT, business, languages, teaching/training, administration and secretarial skills.

It is also responsible for developing new specifications to meet national requirements and the needs of students and teachers. OCR is a not-for-profit organisation; any surplus made is invested back into the establishment to help towards the development of qualifications and support which keep pace with the changing needs of today's society.

This report on the Examination provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding of the specification content, of the operation of the scheme of assessment and of the application of assessment criteria.

Reports should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and mark schemes for the Examination.

OCR will not enter into any discussion or correspondence in connection with this report.

© OCR 2011

Any enquiries about publications should be addressed to:

OCR Publications
PO Box 5050
Annesley
NOTTINGHAM
NG15 0DL

Telephone: 0870 770 6622
Facsimile: 01223 552610
E-mail: publications@ocr.org.uk

CONTENTS

Advanced GCE Geography (H483)

Advanced Subsidiary GCE Geography (H083)

EXAMINERS' REPORTS

Content	Page
Chief Examiner's Report	1
F761 Managing Physical Environments	3
F762 Managing Change in Human Environments	6
F763 Global Issues	11
F764 Geographical Skills	17

Chief Examiner's Report

General Comments

There seemed to be a better understanding of what each paper required in terms of approach with more candidates answering F763 Section A effectively. It is becoming clear that F763 is very effective at differentiating between candidates.

Sufficient space was not an issue with most candidates at AS but many did use additional generic sheets in F764, although there are pages at the back of the answer book specifically for this. It remains important that candidates indicate if they have used pages or continued answers elsewhere. This is particularly important for F763 where candidates should avoid writing answers to Section B in the space for Section A and vice versa. Candidates at AS should continue to show the number of Section B question they are answering, as not indicating this can cause confusion (especially in F762 where tourism often leaks into urban or rural answers).

The quality of communication could be improved by many candidates who struggled to express their ideas, especially in Section A answers for all four question papers. The essay answers in Section B were noticeably of higher quality. Candidates need to understand that it is in the short answer questions that clarity and conciseness are vital.

The quality of handwriting remains an issue. Centres should consider using word processors for their candidates where applicable.

AS Comments

Consistency is the key to doing well at AS. A few weak answers in Section A, often the last part of a question, reduced the overall level of performance.

Those aspects of the examination that were encouraging included a good knowledge and understanding of the topics (especially cause and effect) and effective essay writing which is often a new challenge to AS candidates.

Essays were usually well-argued and candidates scored well in this section but, to be even more effective, candidates should:

- keep to a few detailed examples;
- show some attempt at a conclusion as the mark scheme rewards clear or effective conclusions;
- be wary of chatty introductions;
- think if a sketch map or diagram helps the argument;
- try to keep answers analytical and explanatory rather than purely descriptive;
- make the answer locational with a clear sense of place;
- use more local examples;
- structure their answers – using paragraphs, each with a distinctive aspect;
- produce a plan – which does help organise an answer.

A2 Comments:

The key at A2 is the ability to evaluate. Some candidates do not seem to appreciate what this means so gave broad descriptions. Typically in F764 candidates were asked to evaluate the success of an aspect of their investigation but often this resulted in a description of how they did their investigation. In F763 too many gave causes for their issues in Section A.

Candidates must:

- read the question carefully and then answer each aspect of it;
- be relevant – do not include material not needed;
- exemplify with a clear sense of space or location;
- use diagrams to illustrate points – especially in F764;
- structure their work with a worthwhile conclusion.

F761 Managing Physical Environments

General Comments

Very good candidates were rewarded for some excellent exemplification of the longer responses showing an understanding of the geography being examined and a clear grasp of what the questions required. Essays received high marks where candidates applied their understanding to the question set. Where candidates did not do this, they were often limited to Level 1 in AO2. In AO3, higher scoring responses were well-structured, contained relevant and meaningful conclusions and were written fluently and accurately.

It was clear that many candidates struggled with some of the physical aspects of the specification. This particularly applied to the effects of sea-level change on fluvial and coastal landforms, the processes responsible for the formation of sand dunes and descriptions of cold and hot arid/semi-arid climates. A small number of candidates made rubric errors, often answering both Q1 and Q2.

Comments on Individual Questions

Section A

River Environments

Q1(a)(i)

This was answered well by most candidates. The best responses referred to types of activities, rather than just identifying features from the photograph.

Q1(a)(ii)

Very good responses were seen and were focused on the physical features of the environment and how they gave rise to a range of activities. Many could offer explanations to link cause and effect e.g. "there is flat land alongside the river and this is cheap and easy for building houses."

Q1(b)

Few candidates answered this well and needed to focus more on changes to base level, energy levels and resultant features such as knick points, waterfalls and incised meanders. A large majority of responses incorrectly suggested that rising sea levels increased the amount of water along large parts of a river's course which meant that it was more erosive.

Q1(c)

Good answers explained what it was about excess water that caused problems and developed the economic impacts with reference to effects such as insurance, downward multipliers, disruption to trade/transport and even at a national scale, impacts on GDP, food production and rising import costs. Some very good responses recognised that flooding can create positive economic impacts, such as adding nutrients to soils on flood plains. The most commonly used examples were Bangladesh, Prague and the River Severn.

Coastal Environments

Q2(a)(i)

The best answers to this question made a clear distinction between activities such as recreation and tourism. Responses sometimes needed to refer to appropriate activities for which there was evidence in the photograph.

Q2(a)(ii)

As in Q1(a)(ii), explanations of cause and effect often needed to be more explicit. Higher level answers explained the links well e.g. "the beach is in a sheltered bay which protects the boat users from large waves."

Q2(b)

As in Q1(b), few candidates exceeded Level 1. A minority correctly discussed the rise and fall of sea levels and the resultant distinctive landforms such as rias, fjords, raised beaches and relict cliffs. Those that suggested rising sea level increased erosion rates needed to explain this statement in terms of water depth and wave height.

Q2(c)

When responses focused on the need for protection rather than the methods themselves, Level 2 or 3 marks were generally awarded. Again, however, the links often needed explaining in more detail e.g. "the cost of providing defences was less than the value of the properties that would have been lost."

Cold Environments

Q3(a)(i)

Most candidates interpreted the rose diagram accurately although some did not grasp the idea of orientation and confused it with location. Good use was made of data. To achieve full marks, a description of the overall pattern was expected.

Q3(a)(ii)

Good responses focused on relevant processes such as plucking, abrasion and freeze-thaw, while weaker answers either focused on the factors affecting cirques or explained their N/NE orientation. To reach full marks answers needed to link the processes to the resultant landform e.g. "abrasion at the base of the hollow leads to deepening."

Q3(b)

The best responses focused on description and provided convincing data to back up their statements. Explanation was sometimes offered, but this was not required. Vague references to it being cold would have benefited from more explicit detail, including seasonal variations. Irrelevant material on vegetation and even animal life was sometimes seen.

Q3(c)

The highest level responses showed an appreciation of what it is about cold environments that results in economic opportunities e.g. "skiing takes place in the Alps because the lower temperatures at higher altitudes result in more snow and longer skiing seasons and the steep slopes results in more challenging skiing conditions." To reach Level 3, candidates needed to explain the economic benefits of these activities. Weaker responses simply referred to "more jobs and money" while better responses explained the direct and indirect benefits to the wider economy and gave specific examples of job types.

Hot Arid and Semi-Arid Environments

Q4(a)(i)

The triangular graph was correctly interpreted by many. However, a significant number misread the relative importance of vegetation cover.

Q4(a)(ii)

To gain high marks, candidates needed to give specific detail of processes, such as transportation by saltation. Many focused on factors, such as the presence of vegetation, rather than processes. An explanation as to why sand grains are deposited by wind would have improved the quality of many responses.

Q4(b)

The best responses focused on description and provided convincing data to back up their statements. Explanation was sometimes offered, but this was not required. Vague references to it being hot would have benefited from more explicit detail, including seasonal variations. Irrelevant material on vegetation and animal life was sometimes seen.

Q4(c)

The highest level responses showed an appreciation of what it is about hot arid/semi arid environments that results in economic opportunities e.g. "agriculture takes place in the Draa Valley because the exogenic Draa River provides water for use in irrigation of crops." To reach Level 3, candidates needed to explain the economic benefits of these activities. Weaker responses simply referred to "more jobs and money" while better responses explained the direct and indirect benefits to the wider economy and gave specific examples of job types.

Section B

Q5 and Q6

To successfully answer these questions, candidates needed to link development to the need for management. For example, tourism development can lead to conflicts between locals and visitors, and these need to be managed. Weaker answers tended to focus on the management strategies, without explaining why management was required. Other appropriate development could have included urbanisation and industrialisation. Commonly used examples were the rivers Tees, Thames and Yangtze in Q5 and the Mediterranean, St Lucia and Southampton Water in Q6. Good answers made full use of the examples to illustrate and provide evidence of the points being made.

Q7 and Q8

Many responses to these questions needed to have a much clearer focus on the concept of sustainability. Reference needed to be made as to how the environment could be used both in the present and the future and/or how socio-economic and environmental needs could be met in a balanced way. The emphasis in many of the weaker answers was very much on conservation of the environment, rather than on its sustainable use. Very good responses discussed examples such as Alaska and the Alps in Q7 and the Draa Valley and the Grand Canyon in Q8, sometimes recognising the benefits brought to local communities as well as the more obvious economic gains.

F762 Managing Change in Human Environments

General Comments

Virtually all candidates completed the paper suggesting a high level of preparation in relation to the timing of the paper. There were very few rubric errors. The use of the resources was not always consistent; errors in basic skills costing a significant number of candidates what might be considered fairly easy marks. The follow-on question part (ii) was often answered effectively. This pattern suggests a lack of practice in relation to the use of resources while at the same time sound understanding of the key ideas being examined.

Responses to the six-mark questions generally showed a good level of basic understanding and in many cases some sound development. However, a number of candidates did not respond to the command which asked for “two” factors and went on to mention three or four points. This often resulted in rather superficial answers and was usually self-limiting. A significant number of candidates used appropriate and well-developed examples in the nine- mark questions, at times to great effect. Responses to the essay questions were generally sound. They showed a good level of understanding and in many cases considerable locational detail. It was evident that the majority of candidates had been well-prepared for the essay and a significant proportion of candidates drew up a clear plan which was then used to produce a well-structured essay, often with a sound conclusion.

Two general concerns were identified from a number of scripts. Firstly, it was evident that a number of candidates did not understand some of the basic specification terminology. Terms such as land-use, socio-economic, gross national income, energy mix and renewable energy were not always understood. A second concern was the use of examples which were at times generic or not entirely appropriate because of their historical nature. While general examples can give some insight into the question they often lead to answers which are rather vague or superficial and can be rather descriptive. This can be a significant factor in showing depth of understanding. The choice of example(s) often dictates the overall quality of the response.

Comments on Individual Questions:

Section A

Managing Urban Change

Q1(a)(i)

The use of Fig.1 was generally good with the majority of candidates able to identify a number of changes to the area shown on the map. In some cases observations were slightly vague e.g. “residential areas redone”, “school changed to a supermarket”. While this type of observation showed awareness of change it lacked accuracy and detail. A significant number of candidates identified both specific changes and offered observations about change to the general land-use structure of the area shown on the map.

Q1(a)(ii)

A significant proportion of candidates offered thoughtful observations, often based on the ideas of deprivation or the need for urban regeneration. Where these initial ideas were well-developed, responses were impressive, often showing a sound understanding and clear links to the changes identified in Q1(a)(i).

Q1(b)

Candidates showed a good general understanding of the question, often using the economic, political and environmental factors identified in the specification. The majority of candidates used ideas about development restrictions resulting from environmental factors such as nearness to rivers or environmental legislation. A number of candidates also brought in ideas about economic costs influencing land use, in a number of cases bringing in points about Bid-Rent theory.

Q1(c)

Those candidates who considered the problems of managing waste disposal often used well-documented examples to produce thoughtful answers. These often picked up ideas about the issue of landfill and using urban incineration as well as the challenge of attempting to increase rates of recycling. A number of candidates highlighted the challenges and then went on to use examples of where waste was being managed reasonably successfully. Very often the choice of example and depth of local knowledge was reflected in the quality of the response. In many cases examples drawn from less-developed cities produced excellent opportunities for detailed answers, although, in a small number of cases candidates drifted away from the question and simply wrote a description of the problems found in urban slums.

Managing Rural Change

Q2(a)(i)

The use of Fig. 2 was generally good with the majority of candidates able to identify a number of changes to the area shown on the map. A number of candidates did not make comparative observations but simply described what the area was like in 2010.

Q2(a)(ii)

A number of thoughtful observations were made, including points about the impact of the upgraded main road in attracting new business and housing. Ideas about the relative growth of the larger settlements in relation to the decline of services in smaller settlements were frequently considered, often with thoughtful observations clearly based around examples studied. Other key ideas considered included points about competition from supermarkets hastening the closure of local shops and the growth of dormitory settlements where demand for local services might be limited. A small number of candidates made observations about service provision reflecting population change and the reduction of the number of schools being linked to educational reorganisation.

Q2(b)

It was evident that not all candidates had a clear idea of what is meant by “economic problems”, many drifting into social or environmental ideas. Those candidates who focused on the key idea of “economic problems” generally approached the question in one of two ways. At the basic level candidates simply identified “lack of money” and “lack of jobs” as economic problems, often with limited development and explanation. Those candidates who developed this theme, bringing in ideas about the multiplier and the spiral of decline in rural areas often produced thoughtful answers which showed a good general level of understanding. A small number of candidates took a “second homes” approach, considering the impact of rising house prices in forcing out local people which in turn reduced demand for local services. When carefully expressed, this approach produced a useful discussion.

Q2(c)

The majority of candidates had a good general understanding of the question and were able to identify a number of changes in farming that had affected the environment. Observations about hedgerow loss and the impact of the increasing use of chemical fertiliser and pesticide were common, frequently supported by specific examples. Those candidates who were able to clearly express the link between the change and the specific impact on the physical environment were able to show a sound appreciation of the question and consequently achieve high marks. In the

majority of cases candidates considered the negative impacts of agricultural change. However, a small number of candidates considered recent changes in a positive way, mentioning how set-aside and stewardship schemes may have protected or enhanced the physical environment.

The Energy Issue

Q3(a)(i)

Virtually all candidates were able to use Fig. 3 to identify the basic relationship between Gross National Income and Energy Consumption. The majority of candidates went on to use specific data to develop this idea and pick out any particular anomalies.

Q3(a)(ii)

The majority of candidates considered the basic relationship in terms of levels of development. This idea was developed further by a significant number of candidates who considered the link between wealth and energy consumption in relation to the volume of electrical consumer goods and cars used in different countries. Further ideas included observations about access to energy resources, access to electricity and points about the relative level of infrastructural development reflecting energy use.

Q3(b)

There were some excellent responses to this question with the majority of candidates offering two well-considered ideas. The majority of candidates used the same two points; recognising the need to develop renewable resources because of the finite nature of fossil fuels and considering the need to reduce the environmental impact of fossil fuel exploitation. Other, less well-used ideas included the need for energy security (linked to rising fossil fuel prices and global political instability) and the political pressure for the development of renewable energy resources.

Q3(c)

It was clear that the majority of candidates had a good general understanding of this question and consequently the overall quality of responses was often dictated by locational knowledge. Those candidates who used well-documented examples which clearly linked into the idea of damage to "local environments" generally produced thoughtful answers which showed a high level of understanding. A small number of candidates adopted a more generic approach which tended to express ideas about pollution with only tentative links to their chosen examples.

The Growth of Tourism

Q4(a)(i)

Virtually all candidates were able to use Fig.4 to identify the basic relationship between Gross National Income and Tourist Spending. The majority of candidates went on to use specific data to develop this idea and pick out any particular anomalies.

Q4(a)(ii)

Most candidates were able to express reasons why people in areas with higher levels of economic development were spending more money on tourism. Key points about disposable income and the growing range of tourist opportunities were generally considered by the majority of candidates as their reason. Other ideas included points about the relative awareness of tourist locations (at times linked to education or advertising), and the ease with which wealthier people can travel. A number of candidates considered the US as an anomaly and offered thoughtful reasons for this. It was clear that a small number of candidates had not really understood the data, considering "tourist spending" as average spending within the named country by visitors. Responses based on this idea were generally inappropriate.

Q4(b)

The majority of candidates showed a good understanding of the question, many bringing in ideas about civil unrest affecting the development of tourism. Recent events in the Middle East and Africa were used effectively by a number of candidates to illustrate how tourism can be influenced by political unrest. Other ideas expressed included points about how governments use tourism as a tool for economic development or how environmental designation (National Parks etc.) can stimulate the growth of tourism.

Q4(c)

The majority of candidates had a good general understanding of the question and consequently the overall quality of responses was often dictated by the depth of locational knowledge. Those candidates who used well-documented examples which clearly linked into the idea of damage to "local environments" generally produced thoughtful answers which showed a high level of understanding. Where locational detail was not well-developed, candidates generally considered points about pollution, footpath erosion and habitat destruction in a fairly generic way.

Section B

Q5

The majority of candidates showed a good general understanding of the question and an awareness of the idea of sustainable management. A wide range of largely appropriate examples were used. There were two main approaches to this question, both of which provided a good opportunity to show a sound appreciation of the question. The first approach was to use examples where urban areas were clearly under stress because there may have been a lack of balanced management and consider how managing socio-economic and environmental needs more effectively might allow these areas to be more sustainable. The second approach used examples where sustainable management practices were being used and considered how these management practices were allowing the urban areas to operate more successfully. Candidates using this approach drew from a range of examples at different scales, from newly planned eco-cities to smaller eco-towns and small- scale developments such as BedZed.

Q6

The majority of candidates showed a reasonably good understanding of the question and an awareness of the idea of sustainable management in relation to rural areas. A range of largely appropriate examples were used. There were two main approaches to this question, both of which provided an opportunity to show a sound appreciation of the question. The first approach was to use examples where rural areas were clearly not being managed in a very balanced way and were consequently under stress, usually as a result of environmental pressures. Candidates then went on to consider how balancing socio-economic and environmental needs more effectively might allow these areas to be more sustainable. The second approach used examples where sustainable management practices were being used more effectively and considered how these management practices were allowing the areas to operate more successfully. Those candidates who had a significant amount of locational detail at their command generally produced a sound answer to the question. A number of candidates used examples from urban-rural fringe areas, at times drifting into ideas which may have been more appropriate to urban questions.

Q7

A number of candidates produced very thoughtful and well-documented answers to this question. The majority of candidates had a good understanding of the idea of "energy gap", with many able to quote detailed and accurate data from different countries, or parts of countries (California was a popular and effectively used example). A number of candidates took this one stage further by considering changes to the proportionate use of different resources over time in particular countries. Responses were differentiated largely by the depth of explanation. This was often dictated by the choice of examples. Where candidates used examples from either end of

the development spectrum (as expected), explanation was generally sound. Where the two chosen countries had a similar energy mix, explanation of the “differences” was rather limited. There were two main approaches to the “explanation” part of the question. The first was a simple observation which was based on the level of economic development, and often did not get very far beyond the idea of rich countries having a broader energy mix which included more technological considerations. The second approach took this idea further by linking in ideas about the effect of urban/rural population balance and detailed considerations about how infrastructural development affected energy mix. A number of candidates went on to consider the significance of biomass in less- developed areas and also considered how the development of small-scale renewable energy projects was influencing the energy mix in some of the poorest countries in the world.

Q8

The majority of candidates had well-documented and carefully selected examples at their command. Consequently, the level of description was often detailed, with many candidates able to use specific statistical data about visitor numbers and revenue. Differentiation was often based on one of two considerations. Firstly, those candidates who took a broader view of “economic development”, bringing in social and environmental considerations often produced a more balanced answer where points about the relative importance of tourism were considered in greater depth. Secondly, candidates who fully addressed the question by getting beyond the consideration of individual places and making sound comparative points generally produced effective answers. A considerable number of candidates used their conclusion very effectively to draw together comparative points which ensured that the question had been fully addressed. The choice of examples was often quite critical.

F763 Global Issues

General Comments

The full range in quality of answers was seen and there were responses to all questions on the paper for the examiners to read although some questions received far more answers than others. The rubric regarding question choice was almost universally followed.

In the upper quartile, answers in both Section A and B were focused, detailed and above all, evaluative. Candidates in the lower quartile tended to ignore the resource in Section A and offer unrealistic strategies for the management of the geographical issue. Their essays in Section B did not offer convincing arguments through a weak grasp of theory and concepts and a lack of detailed exemplification. It is clear that time spent planning Section B essay responses is time well spent as the resulting responses tend to answer explicitly the question set. The reorganised answer booklet seems to have been well-used by the vast majority of the candidates; only a small minority started their Section B essays in the part of the answer booklet reserved for Section A answers.

A concern registered by all the examiners is the poor and in some cases, very poor, handwriting of too many candidates. Candidates should be made aware, well ahead of sitting the paper, of any difficulties in reading their handwriting and measures put in place to overcome these.

Comments on Individual Questions

Section A

The most common error seen was that of candidates simply describing, at length, the resource rather than explicitly outlining a geographical issue indicated. An issue does not emerge in a convincing fashion from a purely descriptive approach. Candidates should be strongly advised to follow the straightforward plan of identifying the issue and writing one paragraph outlining it. Reference to the resource is sensible, using details from it such as a particular observation from a photograph or map, a quote from text or facts and figures abstracted from a table, chart or map. It might be that a pattern is a suitable geographical issue, such as the disparity in calorie intake from one world region to another but what is not required is a detailed explanation of that pattern. Candidates would probably find it helpful to write further paragraphs suggesting appropriate strategies for the management of that issue and explaining how each particular strategy would help manage the issue. A good number of candidates need to be reminded that the question is clear in its demands for one issue and more than one strategies, a minimum of two therefore. The more focused responses usually offered one short term and one long term strategy.

Earth Hazards

Q1

Most candidates successfully identified an appropriate issue; the discriminator for this aspect of the question tended to be whether the answer went beyond simple statements such as "...the volcano is erupting..." or "...there is an ash cloud..." into comments about the impacts of the event. Comments about the effect of ash falling on crops in terms of physical damage or prevention of photosynthesis, the disruption to transport systems such as flight paths or the addition of weight to roofs and their possible collapse were convincing. Suggestions of appropriate strategies were generally effective as long as they linked directly to the issue identified previously.

Ecosystems and environments under threat

Q2

Examiners read too many rather superficial responses to this question. Given that this is a specialist option studied for several weeks at A2 level, more authoritative knowledge and understanding of ecosystem processes was anticipated. Good answers could explain the issue in terms of implications for energy flows of the oil spill, such as the impact on different trophic levels and the disruption to food chains and webs. Strategies were too often inappropriate to a forest environment, some even suggesting large-scale clearance of the forest or were extreme such as the banning of oil transport across the world. For a significant number this was seen as an opportunity to write at length about the Deepwater Horizon spill in the Gulf of Mexico. There were responses able to write convincingly about the short-term strategies of techniques of clearing up the spill to the longer term approach of conservation and national park status to protect sensitive ecosystems.

Climatic hazards

Q3

The map of projected maximum temperatures for the UK drew a good number of effective responses. Some candidates became caught up with detailed descriptions of the pattern and tended to miss out the identification of a geographical issue. The more focused answers picked up on issues such as drought, the effect of heat on people and impacts of high temperatures on infrastructure such as road surfaces and metal components e.g. railway tracks. Those who then drifted off into why temperatures might reach the levels suggested tended to miss out on successful discussions of strategies. There were, however, plenty of scripts containing discussions of water conservation techniques and precautionary health measures for people, especially the young and elderly. Examiners were also encouraged to read a good number of answers dealing with possible impacts on agriculture and the potential changes to types of agriculture which might be required in the future, such as different crops and the adoption of drought-resistant varieties.

Population and resources

Q4

The map showing global patterns of average daily calorie intake per capita was generally well-handled by those answering in this Option. Issues such as malnutrition or undernourishment in various locations were identified with authoritative references made to sub-Saharan Africa. Some mentioned over-consumption in other regions with issues such as obesity and its consequences such as diabetes. Strategies were usually concerned with the short term delivery of food aid and longer term ones attempting to increase food production with effective references made to improvements in irrigation, crop and animal breeding and food storage.

Globalisation

Q5

The table of contrasting trade statistics for Germany, South Korea and Uganda, respectively representing MEDCs, NICs and LEDCs, drew plenty of simple descriptions of the contrasting fortunes of such countries. The more discerning answers highlighted the differential impact of globalisation as seen in these trade statistics and related this to standards of living and or quality of life amongst the trio. Convincing suggestions of strategies tended to home in on various techniques of adjusting trade flows such as the opposing approaches of protectionism or free trade. The role of foreign direct investment and various types of aid were also made use of.

Development and inequalities

Q6

Most candidates recognised the fundamental issue of the development gap as highlighted in the text extract. The issue of oil dependency linked with the idea of “resource curse” was identified by some, and while appropriate, was rarely successfully handled. There was some effective material on the particular issues affecting sub-Saharan Africa, picking up on the phrase in the resource “...uphill struggle...” and indentifying why this is so. Strategies for dealing with these stark contrasts in development were generally effective, focusing on matters such as the role of trans-national corporations, various types of aid, infrastructure developments and the beneficial role tourism might play in creating wealth and so improving social aspects of development.

Section B

Examiners reported that they had read many very effective extended writing responses. This clearly represented much intellectual endeavour and development of prose style as well as being the result of a great deal of valuable teaching and learning. Amongst the upper quartile, stretch and challenge was evident and one hopes that much lively classroom debate preceded the sitting of this paper.

One area where centres should give more attention to is the encouragement of using AS material in considering the topics studied for options in this unit. For example, more might be made of the ecosystem components in the Cold and Arid Environments in Unit F761 when studying the Ecosystem and Environments in Danger option and Energy Issues in Unit F762 might have more to contribute both to Globalisation and Development and Inequalities.

Candidates should be urged to become more focused on reading the question before writing their essays and there is a positive correlation between those who plan their discussion and the award of marks from the top end of Level 2 and Level 3. That said, there are a significant number of candidates who write an impressive plan but then do not refer back to it during the actual writing of their answer.

Earth Hazards

Q7

Discussions about the extent to which there is a range of human responses to earth hazards were very common amongst the scripts. Examiners reported reading responses from across the complete spectrum of quality with the key discriminator being the degree to which the candidate dealt with “to what extent?”. Generally discussions were informed about the nature of earth hazards and some effective use was made of case studies with many answers making reference to several different types of earth hazards, such as earthquakes, flooding and mass movement. The more astute drew attention to how and why responses vary according to factors such as level of development, contrasts between urban and rural locations and type of earth hazard. There were some interesting considerations of different responses pre- and post- event and between short and long-term responses.

Q8

This was also a popular question to answer. The focus here was on contrasts in impacts of flooding, both river and coastal. The highest levels could be attained without referring to both types, but many of the more successful essays did make effective use of contrasts between river and coastal flooding. The degree of predictability was a profitable area for the more convincing discussions, which drew attention to the difficulties inherent when dealing with flash floods as compared to slow floods which give time for preparation and protection. More might have been made about the regularity of flooding which can often lead to appropriate strategies minimising the impacts. Regions experiencing clearly defined wet and dry seasons, monsoon for example,

are often well-used to coping with floods, albeit in ways different to experiences in the UK. One fundamental issue which arose in so many essays was the lack of appreciation of scale of discharge when comparing particular floods. While contrasts between Boscastle and Bangladesh have value, the effectiveness of the contrast would be considerably enhanced with some knowledge of the relative discharge levels and persistence of these. Simply to use this pair of case studies as exemplifying the influence of level of development is to omit much valuable material.

Ecosystems and environments under threat

Q9

The key element in this question was the degree to which the discussion picked up on the evaluation of the "... interaction of several factors." If a successful sustainable management is to be achieved, then substantial knowledge and authoritative understanding of elements such as energy flows and the operations of food webs and chains are required. It was quite possible to reach Level 3 in the mark scheme either by a detailed consideration of one ecosystem, or by looking at several examples, each in less depth. Too many candidates answering this question relied on listing a series of factors without considering interaction, feedback or knock-on effects for example. In particular there was an absence of discussion concerning the role of geology and soils and climate in ecosystem management, such as Epping Forest. Much learning of case studies had been achieved by candidates, for example the Great Barrier Reef, Arches National Park and tropical rainforest in locations such as Indonesia. EU policies on marine fishing were a focus in many essays with the more convincing responses able to offer facts and figures in support of their debate as to the degree of success of the measures. Clearly with ongoing interest in and development of policy in this area, this example will offer valuable contemporary material in the future. Examiners were pleased to read in a small minority of answers, some discussion of what "sustainable" might mean, rather than an uncritical reliance on "development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

Q10

As with Q9, discussions considering the degree of intention of threat to ecosystems from human activities displayed a less than convincing grasp of how ecosystems function. There were, however, many candidates who wrote with authority about the impacts of tourism on various ecosystems and environments such as the Great Barrier Reef, tropical rainforest and sand dunes. Examiners read comments about the lack of intent of individual tourists and inclusion of the role of eco-tourism often advanced an argument. The more successful answers were those that appreciated the difficulty of assessing the degree of threat in many cases and how complicated the nature of "threat" can be. For example, discussions about the minimising of threat to rainforest through eco-lodges can be set alongside the impacts arising from the journeys of the eco-tourists to get to and from their destinations.

Climatic hazards

Q11

A relatively small number of candidates tackled this question; this minority, however, generated a wide range of response in terms of quality. Some impressive answers came from those who dealt directly with "prediction". The more convincing discussions indicated substantial knowledge and authoritative understanding of how various atmospheric systems originated and operated and then were able to link these points with prediction. For example, measuring sea temperatures or the position of the jet stream in the contexts of tropical storms and drought over Western Europe respectively. There were some interesting discussions regarding the difficulties of predicting the exact path of a tropical storm despite the sophisticated technology now deployed in various regions of the world. Contrasts based on the level of development of a country had potential, but more effective evaluation than most offered was possible when looking at cyclones. Bangladesh, India and Myanmar may be relatively poor countries but track

and predict cyclones quite effectively; what contributes to these systems becoming hazards are the impacts they have on the inhabitants of the region.

Q12

The contrast in the nature of hazards arising from low and high pressure systems was discussed by slightly more candidates than Q11. Again there was a wide spread in the quality of responses with many showing an encouraging quality of knowledge and understanding as regards physical processes. There is considerable evidence of much more secure material concerning low pressure compared to high pressure systems. With regard to the latter, candidates were reluctant to discuss hazards such as frost, fog and smog for example. When discussing high pressure systems, nearly all the responses focused solely on heat-waves and there was an absence of detailed considerations of drought. A majority of the essays did look at long and short-term impacts and wove in some interesting thoughts on the impacts these have on countries at different points along the development continuum.

Population and resources

Q13

A small minority of the candidature answered this question with most of these struggling to get to grips with the topic. The key issue seemed to be a neglect of the point that they considered the value of the global average annual growth rate. The result was that much of the ensuing discussions were at best peripheral and tended to be mostly irrelevant. Most essays plunged into details of the demography of various individual countries without considering where this placed them in the global perspective. The Specification is clear in its requirements for candidates to study the question for investigation, "How and why the number and rate of growth of population vary over time and space."

Q14

The more popular of this pair of questions produced the full range in quality of responses. The upper quartile generated some very effective discussions with fish (EU Common Fisheries Policy), forestry (Finland) and water (Colorado) featuring in the vast majority of essays as exemplification. The most frequently read approach was one of a sequence of case studies which has potential but too often candidates didn't focus on the key matter of "...to what extent...?". There was also, as has been commented on for Q9, a general absence of discussion regarding the nature of sustainability, something which could offer much genuine stretch and challenge at A2 level; it is also the sort of intellectual engagement candidates will be expected to have in higher education, whether or not they are reading Geography. The more convincing debates were characterised by their willingness to deal with more than simply environmental sustainability and to look at social and economic aspects. For example, in the context of the EU fisheries policies, comments were made about the need to support coastal communities where fishing was highly significant both to the local economy but also to the way of life of the community.

Globalisation

Q15

This was a very popular question and drew many interesting and effective discussions. Those who generated the more convincing argument included in their evaluations material on more than just economic issues; cultural exchange, environmental impacts and political matters made for a diverse and persuasive essay. There were many answers which offered a broad discussion which extended into areas such as international migration, tourism (some links here with AS), terrorism and health issues. Examiners were also encouraged to read comments about international concern regarding various environmental issues such as global warming (Kyoto and Copenhagen conferences), pressures on tropical rainforests, in particular Indonesia linked with the rising global demand for palm oil. It was also good to read evaluations using the

environmental benefits of deindustrialisation in MEDCs as well as the social and economic impacts of primary and secondary sector job losses.

Q16

Evaluations of the attempts by government to manage the impacts of globalisation were less numerous. Most of these were not that successful as evaluations because they tended to be an unpacking of a case study of the impact of globalisation on a country; the three countries usually quoted were Bolivia, China and the UK. The former example usually provided the more convincing material specifically about government management. One hopes that as time proceeds, candidates will maintain a contemporary view of Bolivia and its government's actions. The use of China was less successful as was that of the UK, as essays tended to be caught up with detailing the impacts and the necessity to consider government management not followed.

Development and inequalities

Q17

The 'Question for Investigation' in the Specification which is the focus here is "Why do levels of economic development vary and how can they lead to inequalities?" Historical factors are explicitly mentioned in the content guidance but as with all the essays in this paper, it is the "...to what extent?" discussion which is all important. Examiners reported reading some excellent discussions in which authoritative knowledge was well-deployed in argument. Aspects such as the role of colonialism were prominent with issues such as the extraction of resources to the benefit of the colonising power frequently mentioned. One factor rarely mentioned is the transport infrastructure legacy, with many former colonies left with rail networks which focus on the main port and have little network connectivity within the country. The boost to the colonising nation's level of development might also receive more attention.

Q18

This question was less popular than Q17 although still answered by a sizeable number of candidates. Given the explicit Specification requirement to study inequalities within one named city or large region, the basic level of exemplification was disappointing. Too often the answer tended to be unstructured and didn't address the need to "Assess the degree to which inequalities result from economic factors." London was the most quoted city but knowledge and understanding of the intra-urban pattern of inequality was little more than superficial. This is particularly disappointing given the inheritance regarding intra-urban patterns which many students will have from AS. The region most used was China, but here again the paucity of material left discussions at little more than the level of 'sound'. In both cases, city and region, place names and specific knowledge and understanding are required if an evaluation is to succeed.

F764 Geographical Skills

General Comments

Candidates produced a wide range of performance. The group that achieved the top marks did so by directly answering the question, using detailed examples taken from their own investigations and keeping tightly focused on the requirements of the question.

Many, again, seemed to see this as a “write all you know about” paper and missed the key demands to justify and evaluate. Some centres have clearly carried on their traditional fieldwork investigations without fully appreciating the changed demands of the specification. There remain a significant number of investigation titles that are difficult or impossible to deliver effectively. Some linkage to spatial or locational dimensions is expected. This is what distinguishes geographical investigations from those of other subjects. Centres should remember this when devising investigations and appropriate titles.

Essay questions will be set that come from different stages of the investigation and candidates are expected to know what constitutes each of the six stages. Too many saw Q5 as coming from the conclusion and evaluation stage (stage 6) rather than analysis (stage 5).

Comments on Individual Questions:

Section A

This section is testing the candidates' basic understanding of the ‘tools’ of a geographer. Overall this was answered more effectively than in previous examinations.

Q1(a)(i)

This was an extremely popular question. Overall it was answered well. Centres have clearly prepared their candidates to effectively use and refer to photographs. Most candidates used the photograph well to identify potential risks to the people carrying out an investigation. Candidates should have avoided referring to risks not shown in the photograph.

Q1(a)(ii)

This was broadly done well although some candidates came up with impractical solutions to the risk. Others assumed the best management was to tell students to avoid the hazards. Management is not just about avoiding the risks or hazards. Stronger answers suggested an initial risk assessment or pilot should start and guide the management process. A significant number came up with suggestions that were simply inappropriate for an A level investigation from a school or college. Candidates should remember the context of this paper and only suggest reasonable, in the context of school or college, solutions to problems.

Q1(b)

Few demonstrated that they understood what a proportional symbol was so most missed the ability of proportional symbols to deal with a wide range of data values such as that achieved by proportional spheres. Very few were willing to draw an example although this would have helped focus their answer. Candidates should be encouraged to use a variety of representative symbols both in their investigation and in their class work as preparation for the examination.

Q2(a)(i)

This was not a popular question. Too many candidates persisted in trying to fit their own investigation into the area shown in a map or photograph. This is not recommended practice. In this case many chose a river investigation. Clearly the reference to sampling points, that covered

the whole area and did not touch the river, had been ignored. Candidates rarely used all of the information given on the figure – especially the scale. Such use of the resource is expected to be a feature of a higher level answer.

Q2(a)(ii)

Too many candidates thought this regular pattern of sample points demonstrated random sampling so gave largely inappropriate answers. Answers that saw it as systematic were more appropriate but many used stratified or pragmatic and still achieved a logical response. Those that referred to the figure found it easier to access the higher levels than those giving generic lists of advantages and disadvantages e.g. "The systematic approach clearly led to the farmland being over-represented as it had 12 of the 17 sample points." Others recognised a pragmatic approach e.g. "There is only one sample point in the marsh as it is probably unsafe to have any more in such an area."

Q2(b)

This was done well with a wide range of appropriate factors stated and explained effectively. Candidates have clearly been well-prepared to handle questions of this nature.

Q3(a)(i)

Very few candidates attempted this question. Most found no problems in interpreting the graph and identifying the anomaly – town 5. Some attempt at an overall pattern was expected rather than just a list. Most candidates did quote figures which gave them access to the higher level.

Q3(a)(ii)

This was often answered very effectively. The best answers used annotated diagrams to illustrate and describe two appropriate alternatives. Most chose pie charts but there was a variety of alternatives such as bar charts or percentage bar charts (a more effective alternative).

Q3(b)

The few candidates that did Q3 did seem to know and understand a range of statistical measures of dispersion – usually standard deviation. Measures of dispersion were well-known and their usefulness was clearly appreciated.

Section B

Both questions are compulsory and must show evidence of candidates carrying out real investigations. Generally this was more effective than June 2010 with some good reference to their real experiences.

Answers had to be relevant to the title of the investigation. It is important that candidates do think which is the most appropriate investigation on which to base their answer. Some offered investigations with no discernable analysis or with a yes/no type result for Q5.

Those candidates that achieved the highest marks:

- demonstrated consistently good evaluation – not just the problems (too many candidates take a negative view of everything they did);
- showed detailed locational knowledge – there was a clear sense of place;
- gave good detailed evidence of their investigation (quoting data);
- used appropriate and accurate geographical vocabulary;
- showed they understood cause-effect relationships (they knew why they were doing a particular activity).

It is not expected that answers will be of equal length in Section B. In this case it was quite possible to describe and explain the outcomes of the data analysis in a concise way, especially if only one hypothesis was being tested. It is the depth of evaluation that is critical.

Q4

Few candidates clearly distinguished between the two key terms in this question. Many confused or interchanged them in their answers. The most effective answers fully integrated their investigation experience into the essay with good depth of detail e.g. "It was important to calibrate the various hydroprops that we used to ensure they were measuring uniformly which also ensured both accuracy and reliability." This answer illustrates how candidates could have avoided a common failing, as so many candidates made valid statements but failed to link them to the question of accuracy and/or reliability. Too many looked at what they should have done. Many thought throwing money at the data collection issue would result in more reliable and accurate outcomes.

Candidates should be advised to consider some of the following ways of maximising accuracy and reliability:

- Choice of title, location, timing;
- Initial preparation – use of pilot;
- Sampling strategy – type and size;
- Nature of equipment and its calibration;
- Number of readings – were they repeated?;
- Who took the readings and when?;
- How data was recorded;
- Use and source of secondary data.

Q5

This was a straightforward question but few seemed capable of describing their outcomes with detailed graphs, statistics or maps.

Some candidates clearly had used only one form of analysis – usually Spearman's Rank. Candidates should have used a range of analytical tools many of which are non-statistical e.g. "We drew scatter graphs of the results and it was clear visually that there was no relationship shown. It was therefore pointless to do a Spearman's Rank test." This highlights the correct order of analysis – chart first then statistical test if needed. Better candidates quoted their statistical results with the degree of confidence figure and gave a valid interpretation. Explanation of the outcomes often showed wide-ranging and perceptive geographical knowledge and understanding. Cause and effect were often excellent.

OCR (Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations)
1 Hills Road
Cambridge
CB1 2EU

OCR Customer Contact Centre

14 – 19 Qualifications (General)

Telephone: 01223 553998

Facsimile: 01223 552627

Email: general.qualifications@ocr.org.uk

www.ocr.org.uk

For staff training purposes and as part of our quality assurance programme your call may be recorded or monitored

Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations
is a Company Limited by Guarantee
Registered in England
Registered Office; 1 Hills Road, Cambridge, CB1 2EU
Registered Company Number: 3484466
OCR is an exempt Charity



OCR (Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations)
Head office
Telephone: 01223 552552
Facsimile: 01223 552553

© OCR 2011