

**Geography B**

General Certificate of Secondary Education **J385**

**Examiners' Reports**

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**June 2011**

**J385/R/11**

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

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## CONTENTS

### General Certificate of Secondary Education

### Geography B (J385)

#### EXAMINERS' REPORTS

<b>Content</b>	<b>Page</b>
Chief Examiner's Report	1
B561/01 Sustainable Decision Making (Foundation Tier)	2
B561/02 Sustainable Decision Making (Higher Tier)	4
B562 Geographical Enquiry	6
B563/01 Key Geographical Themes (Foundation Tier)	8
B563/02 Key Geographical Themes (Higher Tier)	15

# **Chief Examiner's Report**

## **General Comments**

This series was the first assessment of the Key Geographical Themes paper and the first opportunity for candidates to aggregate.

For the Controlled Assessment there was the requirement to apply new controlled assessment regulations on levels of control. Centres had to produce work on tasks for the Fieldwork Focus provided by the examination board rather than their own fieldwork titles. Centres are reminded that these tasks along with those of the Geographical Investigation will change each year and centres need to be aware that the titles correspond to the year of submission, which may not be the same as when the task was undertaken. Centres also had to decide upon their individual approach to Geographical Investigation.

The SDME was also a new challenge for some in preparing candidates for an examination based on pre-release material. It is worth reminding centres that the unit being assessed by the SDME will change annually and the future areas of focus in this assessment are already published by the examination board. Centres may enter candidates at either the foundation or higher tier of entry. This may be different from the tier of entry of the Key Geographical Themes examination taken at the end of the course.

The terminal examination was, perhaps, the most familiar assessment component. Candidates from most centres were well-prepared for the examination, obeying the question paper rubric and using case studies which they had learned in class. Centres are reminded that the case studies on both higher and foundation papers are marked using levels criteria. To access the top level answers need to be developed, comprehensive in covering all parts of the question, and place-specific.

The varied nature of the assessments allowed all candidates to demonstrate their strengths and there were many excellent examples of high-calibre geography. Many centres have obviously put a great amount of time and effort into preparing their candidates and they are to be commended on this.

Centres should study the reports of the various assessment components carefully as they give many pointers as to how candidates, in general, may be more successful.

# **B561/01 Sustainable Decision Making (Foundation Tier)**

## **General Comments**

The paper was of an appropriate level for Foundation Tier and was successful in producing a wide range of results. Almost the full range of marks was seen from 0 to 39. There was a lot of evidence that centres had prepared their candidates well.

Most candidates attempted all the questions on the paper and answered the majority fully. The majority of candidates seemed comfortable with the subject matter. The data response questions were well-answered, as were the questions that referred the candidates to a specific resource. The levels marked questions were answered better than in other years with more candidates being able to begin to develop their answers and to explain their ideas in terms of sustainability.

In order to access level 3 marks in the open-ended questions, candidates should be reminded that they need to include their own insight or examples and development points.

## **Comments on Individual Questions**

### **Question 1**

(a)(i) Almost all candidates achieved the mark for this question. Those that selected the wrong answer most frequently chose the answer of sea walls.

(a)(ii) Most candidates answered this question correctly.

(b)(i) The majority of candidates scored two marks on this question – taking the two points they needed to get the marks. Those candidates who only scored 1 mark most frequently gave only one way gabions protect the coast.

(b)(ii) Most candidates were able to give two reasons why gabions are only a short-term measure. Those candidates that did not achieve this grade often gave as an answer that the stones within the gabion would erode rather than that the cage would disintegrate.

Those candidates that did not gain full marks on question 1 often over-complicated their answers by not using the information in the resources.

### **Question 2**

(a) Some candidates gave sound answers within the range agreed as correct by senior examiners, others required more accuracy.

(b) Many candidates recognised that there were defences at X but not at Y and so were able to gain 1 mark. Candidates needed to refer to differences in erosion and/or land use to access the development mark. Some tried to interpret what was not there eg differences in rock type. The idea of longshore drift was sometimes misunderstood (eg 'longshore drift will attack Y more than X').

### **Question 3**

Candidates were able to use the resource to access up to Level 2 and the majority did so. This question differentiated well with only the strongest candidates extending the answer achieving full marks. This is an exemplar where good familiarity with the resources would help. Only a few spotted that Stalham is 5km inland and used this to develop that resident's published response. A few candidates appeared confused in their answers, believing the farmer to be opposed and the environment manager was in favour of the scheme.

### **Question 4**

(a) The majority of candidates were able to score full marks on this question.

(b) This question proved a good differentiator. There were some very good responses from candidates who compared at least two different locations and understood the concept of protecting a location because of its economic value and level of service provision.

### **Question 5**

All sections of this question seemed to differentiate well. All options were chosen in a fairly even spread. Good answers interpreted rather than lifted information from the resources.

Many candidates discussed relative cost/benefits of the schemes. However, there were a significant number of candidates that explained how the schemes worked rather than why they should be used over the other methods.

Candidates should be reminded that the resources are a stimulus to a response, not the response itself and there is a requirement to develop their answers.

Candidates who chose Option 1 were often those who were best able to develop their answer, showing an understanding beyond just protecting the cliff – realising that by doing so you were protecting the village and its community also.

Candidates who chose Option 2 referred to the idea of repair as a cheaper option to building new. The better answers here showed an understanding of beach replenishment, building up the beach, which was then developed into the idea of attracting tourists and so generating income for the area; or the idea that a wide beach is the best form of natural defence for the coastline.

Candidates who chose Option 3 did well when they recognised that this was the cheapest option and that it would create new environments eg salt marshes which are another very good form of natural coastal defence. Some of the best candidates showed an understanding of the key issues of the cost of coastal defences and the question over who should pay, as we don't all live in an area of coastal erosion. The need for this background geographical knowledge has to be stressed, as this paper cannot be answered from the resources alone. Extending candidates geographical knowledge of the study areas in the SDME during the preparation time is to be highly encouraged.

# **B561/02 Sustainable Decision Making (Higher Tier)**

## **General Comments**

There was good preparation for the examination with all abilities providing evidence that they found the resources accessible. A wide range of marks was seen from 0 to 40. The rubric was followed with few errors. There were very few instances where candidates made no attempt to answer a question. A significant number of candidates were able to include their additional research and gain credit in their answers particularly to questions 3 and 4. Candidates need to be aware that developing one or two strong arguments will gain more credit than multiple reasons on level response questions such as question 5.

The standard of written work was good overall. Candidates need to be encouraged to use paragraphs in their answers. The use of the term sustainability continues to be used without candidates always completely understanding the term. There was less use of geographical terms such as 'multiplier effect' without some explanation.

## **Comments on Individual Questions**

### **Question 1**

(a) Most candidates scored 1/2 for this section as they 'lifted' the information on wooden groynes from Resource 1 so gaining the mark for 'trapping sediment' but nothing for how they stop erosion. Relatively few were able to gain a second mark for 'stopping movement'.

(b) Most candidates gained at least 1 mark for this question and mainly for comparing the characteristics of the wooden and rock groynes. The best answers were where the candidates used comparative words such as 'harder', 'weaker', 'erodes more slowly'. Candidates did not gain credit where they said 'rock lasts longer' or 'lasts up to 3 times longer' without saying why. Description of wooden and /or rock groynes was not credited as there needed to be comparison included of the two types.

### **Question 2**

This question was generally well answered. The better answers described the difference in the rate of erosion between X and Y, identifying the coastal protection measures at X and their absence at Y. Few candidates were able to link the protection measures to coastal process by explaining the protection processes associated with groynes and/or revetments. The better answers referred to sediment build-up at X and starvation of beach sediment at Y. Those that also included accurate figures in their answer scored 6 marks. Candidates who gave a general answer and did not refer to either X or Y or compared 1999 with 2006 gained no credit.

### **Question 3**

Almost all the candidates correctly identified stakeholders for and against protection measures. There was a very small number of candidates who chose an inappropriate opinion for a stakeholder and this was usually for the Environment Manager. Few candidates were awarded Level 1 marks as they are more aware that 'lifted material' gains minimum credit. Many candidates gave the same ideas as in Resource 4 just rearranging the format and adding some new words which limited them to Level 2. There was a number of good candidates who were able to develop the viewpoints using their own ideas. Very few candidates referred to Resource 3 but those that did tended to gain credit at Level 3 as they were introducing ideas not in Resource 4. Examples included the Stalham resident who lived away from the coast and was

more interested in limited funds being spent on services that benefited more people than just those in Happisburgh and the effects on tourism/ecosystems in the Norfolk Broads for the Environment Manager.

#### **Question 4**

This question proved to be a good discriminator. The best answers were where candidates provided developed reasons for the different plans. For example Cromer was often given as 'holding the line' over the 3 terms because of its population size, tourist economy, difficulty of relocating so many people and loss of historic landmarks. Bacton North Sea Gas Terminal was the most commonly quoted plan as candidates could explain why the plan was to hold the line whilst gas supplies were available and then in the long term to 2105 have managed retreat when gas supplies had been exhausted. There were many Level 2 answers as candidates gave simple reasons for each of the plans. Candidates who simply gave a list of reasons why plans were different, for example population size and economic value, achieved level 1 marks. Candidates who discussed Happisburgh for which there were no plan details, were awarded no credit. A few candidates did not base their answer around resource 7 although the question did reference it. A small minority wrote about different coastal protection methods rather than plans.

#### **Question 5**

The majority of candidates followed the bullet points in the question to structure their answer and this provided them with a checklist to ensure they covered all parts. No one option appeared to be a more popular choice than the other two. Too few candidates accessed level 4 on this question and the main weakness was that candidates assumed they knew what the question was asking and so misunderstood the requirements of this particular question in this examination session. In particular in the first section, candidates wrote about the advantages of their chosen option and the disadvantages of their rejected options and this wasted valuable time as they did not include comparative statements. Too few candidates were able to explain why their chosen option was more sustainable than the other two. Where this was done, the most common correct reasoning was based on cost for option 2 or 3 and durability for option 1 or 2. A significant number of candidates made a simple statement about an option being the most/least expensive without comparing it with another option. The majority of candidates picked up marks in the disadvantage of their chosen option section and to a lesser extent the advantages of the rejected options. For these parts of the answer the lack of quality lay in the depth of the reasoning rather than any misreading of the question. Candidates generally showed a good understanding of sustainability but not in relation to the demands of the question. Answers from the more able candidates contained well thought-out ideas and a clear understanding of the concepts. They were able to use the resources and their own research well to support their answer.

## **B562 Geographical Enquiry**

In this fourth session for entry for this new specification for controlled assessment for B562 there has been a combined entry of nearly 500 centres and over 21000 candidates – a significant increase on January of this year and June of last year.

Administration by centres continues to improve, but there are still difficulties with a few centres' email addresses. Some centres did not use the official assessment grids or did not complete them fully with candidate numbers. It is essential that this is done and that the two assessments for each candidate are securely put together. Moderators appreciated the centres who annotated the assessment grids as it allowed them to see where credit was given for the various objectives. Some centres incorrectly submitted their entries via the OCR Repository but subsequently send their work by post and it is important that all centres check how they submit their work.

The Enquiry involves centres selecting one Fieldwork Focus title from four and a choice of 18 titles for the Geographical Investigation. The Fieldwork Focus titles were all selected but the majority chose the coasts title. The majority of centres split their chosen title into several appropriate key questions and this provided a focus for primary data collection, analysis, making substantiated conclusions and evaluations. Most centres selected one or two titles for their candidates to research in the Geographical Investigation. The favourites were Stadia, Gun crime, National Parks, F1 and sweatshops. There were some centres who allowed a free choice. The vast majority of candidates chose to write a research report, while others did a PowerPoint presentation, booklet/poster or even an oral interview. A few centres provided some sources for their candidates, the vast majority allowed candidates access to the internet for their research which was recorded in a diary. The vast majority of centres used ICT extensively in both their fieldwork and reports for research and presentation of their work. This allowed some centres to submit their work electronically using the Respository.

The standard of marking was mixed as one might expect for a new specification with a significant number of centres being over generous in marking both components. The majority of centres did mark close to the nationally agreed standard as they had attended INSET or had looked at OCR examples and fully understood the requirements of controlled assessment. There were some adjustments in a downward direction and some in an upward direction. The reasons for these changes were many and are mentioned below.

The Fieldwork Focus on the whole was marked closely to the assessment criteria. Centres that did not were those who did not split the title into key questions, provide a methodology table, collect sufficient primary data or present it in a variety of graphs. Some candidates did not locate their study area on a map, or show where data had been collected. These candidates analysed their findings in a superficial manner and did not giving any reasoning. Many candidates did not annotate photographs. There were some excellent examples of candidates who had combined maps, photographs, graphs and their analysis on one page. They also made substantiated conclusions by returning to their key questions. Some centres used their methodology tables to help candidates evaluate their methods and make realistic suggestions to improve their enquiry.

The Geographical Investigation was marked more closely to the assessment criteria. A significant number of centres encouraged their candidates to write a thought shower to help them identify key questions and give their report a logical structure. Once again the majority of centres continued to insist on a research diary and the best had candidates acknowledging sources and evaluating their validity, often in a table. They also acknowledged images directly and linked them with a numbering system to their bibliography. There were some excellent examples of speech bubbles being used to express the views of different stakeholders. High level candidates once again made substantiated conclusions, looked to the future where

appropriate and had researched sources extensively. Candidates need to include images, maps, quotes, diagrams or graphs. They must also acknowledge their sources and include mention of stakeholders.

In both assessments one common problem was the word count which in some centres was exceeded significantly. However, many centres recognised this in their annotations of individual candidates on their assessment grids. High level candidates only selected a manageable number of key questions within the word count limit. This allowed them to be focused, have precision and succinctness- centres need to ensure that candidates are encouraged to do this.

Overall there continues to be an improvement in the quality of the work produced and it was very encouraging to see candidates enthusiastically take the opportunities offered, especially on their fieldwork on coastlines. They showed initiative, imagination and independence at a high level. It was also encouraging to moderate complete pieces of work, even from weaker candidates, where they had attempted all elements of the assessment. Centres should read with care the comments included in their individual centre reports which will indicate where improvements could be made and where they needed to understand the needs of particular assessment criteria.

## **B563/01 Key Geographical Themes (Foundation Tier)**

### **General Comments**

This was the first examination for OCR GCSE Geography Specification B. The examination was at an appropriate level of difficulty for foundation candidates. The clarity and quality of the Resource Booklet enabled candidates to access the geographical resources and demonstrate their skills, understanding and knowledge. Many examiners remarked that weaker candidates attempted more questions and that there were fewer empty spaces compared with legacy examinations. A wide range of performance and achievement was noted. The most successful candidates showed the following features:

- They were familiar with examination technique.
- They read and selected their questions with care and thought.
- They responded well to specific examination command words and structured their responses accordingly.
- They had a clear understanding of geographical terms and specification specific vocabulary.

Key words affecting performance for the 2011 paper were:

Question 1: landforms, upper course, lower course, meander, erosion, deposition

Question 2: landforms, erosion, longshore drift

Question 3: ageing population

Question 4: urban area

Question 5: drought, sustainable, climatic conditions.

The most successful candidates selected relevant case studies and applied their knowledge to the requirements of the case study questions. Their answers included place-specific detail. Less successful candidates were not as discerning in their choice of question. Their case study responses had generic rather than place-specific knowledge. Lack of understanding of key words inhibited some responses. Rubric error was an issue. Some candidates attempted all six questions and then crossed out one of each pair, this is not a good use of the time available during the examination. Candidates must be reminded to answer one question from each section and not just the question parts they are most confident with. The most successful candidates made informed question choices and focused their thinking on producing good quality responses.

In terms of knowledge and understanding of the specification themes, ideas about river flooding and the impact of coastal erosion were well covered. Less secure were descriptions and explanations of landforms and processes in the Rivers and Coasts section.

Candidates showed a sound grasp of population pyramids, population structure and change in Question 3, with China's One Child policy being used to make this the most successful case study question. With Question 4, candidates showed a good understanding of the features of squatter settlements and rural-urban migration in LEDCs. Ideas about rural-urban migration in MEDCs were less convincing and most case study answers lacked precise examples and knowledge.

The Tectonic Hazards (Question 6) was more successfully answered than the Climatic Hazards (Question 5). Candidates showed a good understanding of monitoring and preparing for volcanic eruptions. Few candidates were able to apply their knowledge of plate tectonics to produce a

high scoring diagram. Examples of recent earthquakes were noted in the case study responses. Knowledge and understanding of drought was less secure in Question 6. The application of sustainability to drought management methods proved particularly challenging. There were some good case studies based on recent tropical storms. Most drought case studies were answered in very general terms.

In preparing candidates for future examinations it would be useful to focus on the following:

- Candidates should practise reading examination questions and selecting their best three under examination conditions. Question selection success criteria can be shared with case study knowledge at the top of the list.
- Candidates should be familiar with commonly used command words, such as describe and explain, and how they indicate the thinking required for a successful response. They should be encouraged to look for and underline command words during the examination.

Short, sharp, focused answers should be given for the skills questions. This reduces unnecessary writing time.

Candidates should be aware of the two types of four-mark questions. For open questions which do not require a specified number of responses, four basic ideas can achieve full marks. For questions which specify two responses, each must be developed with detail to gain full marks. Candidates could highlight the word 'two' for such questions.

Candidates should be aware of the requirements of the eight-mark case study question. A relevant example is needed, with correct information given for each section of the question. Accurate place-specific detail is needed to secure full marks. Examiners mark online and the internet is used to check the validity and accuracy of unusual and unexpected case study examples to ensure credit gained as appropriate.

In addition to the eight-mark case study question, there will always be a two mark knowledge recall question. This will usually involve the definition of a key geographical term. Candidates can underline key geographical words in these and four-mark questions. Specification theme glossaries are useful for developing and reinforcing understanding of the meanings.

## Comments on Individual Questions

### Section A Rivers and Coasts.

#### Question 1

(a) Most candidates managed to score marks although OS map reading skills proved to be a challenge for some. Many candidates were not able to identify the correct number of the A road shown in the aerial photograph for part (i). Some candidates gave the number of the road as 'one'. Most candidates successfully identified the correct grid square in (ii) and most were able to give the correct direction in part (iii).

(b) Most candidates were able to score at least one mark by naming or describing the obvious meander shown in Fig. 1. Few candidates went on to describe other evident landforms such as the floodplain, tributary or river mouth. Many candidates lacked understanding of the term '*landform*' and gave descriptions of land uses shown in Fig 1.

(c) A few candidates were able to use their knowledge of river landscapes to describe the landforms associated with the upper course of a river. Waterfalls were common along with V-shaped valleys and interlocking spurs. Some candidates then described the processes linked to waterfalls. This proved to be a waste of valuable time. Most candidates did not understand the

term '*upper course*' by incorrectly describing the 'upper' part or background of the photograph Fig.1. Many candidates chose to describe land uses again showing a lack of understanding of the term '*landform*'.

(d) Just over half of the candidates were able to name a meander as the correct term for a bend in a river. There were many incorrect spellings of this word. A higher proportion of candidates scored one mark for correctly identifying Y as the location of erosion and X for deposition.

(e) Candidates who scored on this question were able to show or describe the connection between fast flow and erosion and slower flow and deposition. Few were able to link these ideas to the energy or power of the river and its inability to transport its load. Few candidates linked high energy to erosion, with even fewer able to mention relevant erosion processes to support their answers. The most popular misconception was that erosion occurs on the inside of a river bend and vice versa for deposition.

(f) Some very good case study answers raised the mean mark of Question 1. The Boscastle flood of 2004 was by far the most common. Other valid recent UK examples were also given such as Carlisle and York. Other 'local' examples were given and checked by examiners using the internet to assess their validity. Some of these examples could be the result of well-managed field visit studies. Bangladesh was also a popular, high scoring choice as an example of larger scale flooding. Some candidates chose Mozambique as their example with a few focused on flooding along the river Mississippi as an MEDC case study. Many accounts of the effects of the flooding were stated in general terms or were weakened by incorrect ideas, such as people being killed at Boscastle. The better responses included place-specific information with some accurate impact data such as the extent and cost of damage, flood levels or fatalities. Flood management methods were again described in general terms although some were clearly linked to the chosen example. Channel modification, bridge changes and car park relocation were good place-specific ideas for Boscastle.

## Question 2

(a) Most candidates were able to find the grid squares and identify at least one correct coastal feature. Just fewer than half the candidates scored all three marks.

(b) Most candidates were able to identify and name at least one coastal landform shown in the photograph of Saltwick Bay (Fig. 2). The stack, stump and cliff were the most common. Some candidates did not understand the word '*landform*' and gave answers such as '*erosion*' and '*deposition*'.

(c) A few candidates were able to name and describe relevant coastal erosion processes. Most common were hydraulic action and abrasion/corrosion. Some candidates gained two marks for naming valid processes but not being able to describe them or giving incorrect descriptions. Some candidates repeated the word erosion without any clear ideas about how the process operates.

(d) Most candidates scored at least one mark by describing how hard rock would be more difficult to erode or vice-versa with softer rock types. Some candidates developed their answers with reference to specific rock types such as granite, chalk, limestone and boulder clay. Only a few candidates were able to link differences in rock type to coastal landforms such as headlands and bays and processes such as cliff slumping.

(e) Just over half the candidates scored marks with this question. Most produced a diagram with a characteristic zig-zag pattern for longshore drift. The accuracy of the arrows was needed for further marks and correct coverage of swash and backwash were needed to secure full marks.

(f) As with Q1 (f) some very good case study responses were seen. All the examples given were UK based with the coastlines of Holderness, Norfolk and Dorset featuring most prominently. Examiners also checked the validity of some unusual examples which again could be the result of well-managed field visits.

The effects of coastal erosion were often expressed in general terms with impact on landforms and property both being valid. Examiners also checked the validity of the management methods given for the chosen place example. Many were general accounts of sea walls, rip rap and groynes. Some very clear place-specific knowledge was shown such as the two rock groynes at Mapleton and the pioneering use of 'geotubes' at Dunwich.

## **Section B Population and Settlement.**

### **Question 3**

(a) Most candidates correctly read the pyramids to score three marks. Exceptions were those who gave 60 or 12 as an incorrect answer to part (iii).

(b) Most candidates scored two marks by describing the birth and death-rate related features of the Lesotho pyramid. Some focused on shape eg narrow top, wide bottom and some gave interpretations of the shape such as high birth-rate/many young people and high death- rate/not many older people. Reference to the actual 'pyramid' shape was also credited.

(c) Candidates who were familiar with the Demographic Transition Model gave the most credible suggestions. Declining birth-rates due to increased access to family planning and increased life expectancy due to improved health care were the most common routes to four marks. Some candidates linked these ideas to changes in the pyramid shape. Some candidates suggested continued high birth and death- rates without any supporting ideas or explanation. Only the latter were given any credit, such as high death rate due to war, famine or epidemic.

(d) A well-answered question with most candidates scoring marks. The most common ideas were linked to better health care, diet, access to water. Health care ideas were successfully developed with references to doctors, hospitals, medicines, immunisation and other factors.

(e) Successful answers focused on the increased costs and burden of ageing populations in MEDCs. Most ideas were linked to health care and pensions with references to the tax burden faced by governments and working populations as developed explanations. Some candidates described the features of an ageing population but were not able to contextualise these as problems faced by MEDCs. Candidates who lacked understanding of the concept of an ageing population struggled to formulate credible ideas or explanations.

(f) This was the best answered case study question in the entire paper. Most candidates chose China's One Child Policy and showed sound knowledge of how it operates and its effects on people. References were made to incentives and punishments with convincing detail. Ideas linked to male children being favoured were developed with references to abandoned female babies. Problems of caring for elderly relatives, the 1-2-4 problem, were highlighted as was the concept of 'Little Emperors'. Some candidates showed current knowledge by referring to the use of fertility drugs leading to multiple births to circumvent the law. Some candidates focused on 'cabbages and condoms' in Thailand and the impact on birth- rates and social attitudes. As ever a few candidates confused China with Japan which does not have a policy on numbers of births.

#### Question 4

(a) Most candidates correctly read the bar graph to score three marks. The exceptions were those who only gave '15' for part (ii) and Shanghai for part (iii).

(b) Most candidates scored marks on this question with urban pull factors being the most common ideas. Few candidates referred to credible rural push factors. A few candidates misread the question and gave ideas about migration from LEDCs to MEDCs.

(c) This question was well-answered with brief descriptions of building materials and conditions being the most common. Some candidates wasted time by writing more detailed comments about quality of life which was the focus of the following question.

(d) Another well-answered question by most candidates. Some provided list-style responses whilst others developed a particular point by explaining the cause of the problem or its consequences for the people. Poor living conditions linked to lack of sanitation, no access to clean water, overcrowding were common as were references to high crime rates, lack of opportunity and insecurity of tenure.

(e) Most candidates provided only basic responses to this question. They contrasted the noise and hectic pace of urban living with the quieter, more relaxed rural idyll. Some ideas were linked to retirement of urban dwellers, although few candidates considered changes in technology allowing for flexible working from home. A common misconception was that urban dwellers moved to rural areas to take up employment opportunities in farming.

(f) Better answers were focused on specific changes within UK cities. Many of these were local examples of change usually linked to retail or service provision or the building of new housing estates. New or redeveloped shopping centres also enabled candidates to give credible reasons to explain the changes. Some candidates gave detailed descriptions of changes in London linked to the forthcoming Olympic Games. A few candidates gave LEDC examples based on the development of squatter settlements in cities such as Rio de Janeiro and Nairobi. Their reasons were linked to rural-urban migration factors. Most candidates gave a named large UK city such as London followed by vague ideas about changes in shopping, transport or housing. Some candidates named a country as their example and wrote about population change or migration showing a lack of understanding of the term '*urban area*'.

#### Section C Natural Hazards.

#### Question 5

(a) The question began with a two-mark definition task. Most candidates referred to a shortage of rainfall or water to score one mark. Reference to time was also needed for the second mark. Some candidates gave a definition of famine.

(b) Most candidates were able to interpret the map evidence to gain three marks. Some included Mexico in part (i) and gave medium risk as an incorrect response.

(c) Lack of money, planning and resources were given as general responses. Dependence on water for crop and food production were also cited, as were issues linked to the use of contaminated water supplies.

(d) The most common responses focused on water restrictions in MEDCs such as hosepipe bans. Very few candidates considered strategic responses involving water supply management measures such as storage reservoirs or water meters. Some candidates did not read the reference to MEDCs and based their responses on the LEDC methods shown in Fig 7.

(e) Most candidates described the possible unsustainability of the methods shown in Fig. 7 focusing on lack of rainfall and water table depletion. Many candidates gave accounts of how the methods would operate without considering their sustainability. Few candidates were able to comment on the economic sustainability of these low cost/low maintenance methods and social sustainability regarding long term health and community control. The concept of sustainability is embedded within all four specification themes. Candidates should be encouraged to apply sustainability criteria when considering the effectiveness of planning strategies for the range of hazards specified in Theme 3.

(f) Tropical storms responses were the most successful case studies, with Bangladesh and Burma being the most common. Some candidates also used examples from the Caribbean such as Hurricane Mitch. Descriptions of the impact were expressed in general terms. Accurate data and evidence were needed for higher marks. For the climate conditions successful responses described high sea temperatures and ocean locations as source areas for tropical storms. Drought case studies were less successful. They often gave Africa as an LEDC or a named African country with very general points about the possible effects of a drought usually linked to famine. Low rainfall was given for climatic conditions when reference to high pressure weather systems and high temperatures were needed to score marks. Some candidates gave MEDC responses such as Hurricane Katrina. For these examples credit was given for relevant knowledge and understanding.

### **Question 6**

(a) Most candidates were able to interpret the map evidence to score three marks.

(b) Most candidates were successful with ideas linked to measuring plate movements, earthquake detection and monitoring of gas and other emissions being the most common. Ground deformation and gurgling magma were also included by some candidates. Monitoring the frequency of eruptions was also a valid response.

(c) Some candidates were able to describe and/or show a relevant type of plate movement for volcanic eruptions. Most common were accurate depictions of subduction zones. Very few candidates were able to show or describe how the intense heat and friction leads to the melting of crust to create magma. Some candidates scored marks for responses which focused on magma rising at constructive plate margins. A common misconception was magma being forced to the surface by the collision of two plates.

(d) The most discerning candidates were able to describe a different facet of each tip shown in Fig. 9 and linked this to keeping people safe. Tip 1 focused on locations of dangers and/or safe places. Tip 2 on the time factor and readiness of emergency services. Tips 3 and 4 were about avoiding panic and moving people quickly and calmly to safer locations. Some candidates repeated the question stem by merely stating that the tips made people safer. A few candidates copied out the wording of the resource to score no marks at all.

(e) This was well-answered by most candidates. Soil fertility and tourism were the most common responses with many candidates able to explain and develop their answers. Mineral wealth and geothermal heat were also given as benefits. Family ties and poverty were credited as reasons why people may not want to or be able to move to safer locations. Ignorance of the dangers or security provided by monitoring and warning systems were also credited. Cheaper land and housing were not accepted along with liking the view, thrill seeking or researching into volcanoes.

(f) The most successful case study responses focused on the 2010 earthquake in Haiti. Earthquakes in Pakistan/Kashmir and Sichuan in China also scored well. The Asian tsunami of 2004 also scored well if focused on an LEDC. Indonesia, Montserrat and Nevado del Ruiz were the more successful examples of volcanic eruptions. As with Q5(f) ideas about the impact of the hazard were expressed in general terms with fewer candidates giving credible data to support their ideas. Building design, practice drills and well-prepared emergency services were commonly given as impact reduction methods for earthquakes. Emergency relief operations were also valid in the context of LEDC places. Some candidates still believe that early warning systems can be applied to earthquake planning. A few candidates gave clear descriptions of hazard mapping, evacuation and redevelopment ideas linked to Montserrat to score full marks.

Some candidates gave MEDC examples with Kobe and the recent Sendai earthquakes in Japan being most common.

## **B563/02 Key Geographical Themes (Higher Tier)**

### **General Comments**

The paper allowed widespread differentiation. There were many excellent answers in which candidates demonstrated a thorough grasp of geographical principles and a detailed knowledge of place specific case studies to support their argument. It was suggested by examiners that some centres might be entering candidates for the higher tier who may be better suited to the foundation paper. A strong characteristic of weaker candidates is vagueness in many of their answers, especially where case study knowledge is required. If candidates are to reach level 3 in case study sections there is a requirement that their answer is place-specific in addition to being comprehensive. A good way to test this requirement is for candidates to read their answer and 'cover up' the name of the case study. A suitable answer about a particular place or event will be recognisable through the detailed references being made.

Where case studies were on familiar topics candidates scored well. This was evident in questions 1, 2, 3 and 6. However, where case studies were not so well rehearsed, as in questions 4 and 5, answers were sometimes inappropriate or lacked detail. Most candidates selected appropriate case studies which they had learned in detail. This included some weaker candidates for whom the case studies were the best answers. For some candidates the challenge was to select the appropriate detail to use in answering the specific question. Some candidates decided to write all they knew about the case study, whether it was relevant or not.

Candidates needed to pay attention to the key words such as 'geology' (Q2) and 'destructive plate margin' (Q6), and should heed key instructions such as 'compare the growth' (Q4).

Three particular areas of examination technique which candidates may improve upon are as follows. Many candidates did not do as well on the questions which tested simple OS map reading skills as they did on the paper in general. Centres should give their candidates the opportunity to revise and apply basic map interpretation skills which they have learned. Candidates drew some excellent annotated diagrams and then repeated the same answer in text beneath. Candidates do not have to do both. There are opportunities in each question for candidates to develop answers, and in some questions they are instructed to do so. Candidates need to consider how they might do this when the opportunities arise.

Q1 and 2 were equal in popularity. Q3 was overwhelmingly more popular than Q4. Q6 was slightly more popular than Q5. There was little evidence of any attempt to evaluate questions before starting to answer them or to make rough plans for answers. Candidates are advised to read through the whole paper before they begin their answers in order to pick out their best-known topics to start with. Also they should plan their answer in order to check relevance to the question before it is too late.

Very few candidates infringed the rubric requirement. Time management was not a major issue for candidates who completed all their answers. Some candidates also lost marks by misreading or misinterpreting sections and consequently writing irrelevant answers. For example, they described the consequences for cities of urban-rural migration in Q4, they explained the distribution of volcanoes in Q6, and they chose case studies from MEDCs in questions 5 and 6.

Although the examination system is perpetual it must be remembered that in each year the examination is a unique experience for that group of candidates. Consequently the following advice may be useful to candidates about to embark on their final preparation for their 2012 examination.

- Obey the rubric instructions;
- Read each question carefully;
- Pay particular attention to key words which are often emboldened, also 'command' words and words which set the context or scale of the answer;
- Recognise any change of emphasis within the question focus;
- Recognise that questions are usually based around a theme which will provide a link between sections;
- Do not repeat the same answer in different sections – such answers do not gain double credit;
- Be precise when using information from maps, graphs and diagrams;
- Relate questions to examples and identify appropriate case studies which have been learned;
- Learn the details of case studies to give them authenticity;
- Use the number of marks available for a section as a guide to the number of points needed;
- Develop ideas and extend answers in order to increase the marks which can be awarded;
- Re-read and check the answers if there is time at the end of the examination;

## Comments on Individual Questions

### Question 1

(a)(i) Most candidates identified the road correctly as the A171. An error made by some candidates was to read the number of the road from the map key, hence giving the incorrect answer of A470. Other candidates identified the A169 which was not shown on the photograph.

(a)(ii) Many candidates correctly identified the six-figure grid reference. Where candidates gave an incorrect answer they showed a lack of understanding of the technique of identifying a location through a grid reference. Locations which were outside the area of the map extract were even suggested. A small number of candidates incorrectly gave four-figure grid references.

(a)(iii) This was a challenging question which tested the ability of candidates to use the map scale accurately. They were helped by being given four possible answers, but the distracters were all chosen by a significant number of candidates.

(b) Candidates answered this question well by making good use of the photograph to identify a range of features, both from the river and its valley. Features most identified included meanders, river mouth, lower course and flood plain. Many candidates also scored marks for their descriptions of land use in and around the river. A feature of good answers was the use of terminology, such as tributary and confluence. Unfortunately a few candidates wrote that tributaries were 'going off' the river. Errors which characterised weaker answers included reference to the river flowing away from the sea, meanders were sometimes confused with interlocking spurs, and the valley was described as 'V shaped'. Some candidates incorrectly focused on river processes such as erosion and deposition. Some also stated that the river is 'fast flowing' which cannot be determined from the photograph.

(c) Many candidates scored both marks available for this question. The most common correct answers referred to speed of flow, width of the river, and features associated with the upper course of the river such as waterfalls. Some candidates did not understand the term 'upper course' and described it as being a largely built-up area. These candidates appeared to be confused about the direction of flow of the river which starts at the sea and flows into tributaries. Some candidates were confused by the question and focused their answer on the OS map itself by reference to map symbols. Other incorrect responses focused on how the area might now look different to how it is shown on the OS map, for example trees might have been cut down and the meanders would be wider.

(d) Candidates answered this question in different ways. Some chose to focus on the original formation of a meander whilst the majority concentrated on the processes which develop the feature. Many candidates included well-labelled diagrams or a series of diagrams as part of their answer, and some candidates scored all marks on their diagram. A few candidates were unsure where the processes of erosion and deposition take place on a meander. Weaker answers stated that a river had to flow round obstacles but did not expand on the idea. Also some candidates thought that the woodland was a major obstruction to river flow. Finally some candidates focused on the formation of an ox-bow lake rather than a meander.

(e) The processes of river transport were well described by many candidates, who were able to name and briefly describe appropriate methods. Some candidates did not match up the name of the process with the correct description or omitted the name, but they still scored half marks. All four transport processes were included in answers given by candidates. Incorrect answers usually referred to erosion processes or occasionally deposition.

(f) Many candidates had learned a detailed case study. Although many different examples were used, the most commonly described river management schemes were the Valency, Thames, Ouse, Eden and Severn in the UK. Also the Mississippi, Rhine and the three rivers which flow through Bangladesh were used as examples from other countries. The name of a town where flooding has occurred was accepted as an alternative to the name of the river. Some candidates did waste time describing the causes and effects of flooding which were not required by the question. Management strategies were usually better described than the explanation of their sustainability. Some candidates explained sustainability in words such as 'these measures will last' and 'these methods are quite cheap'. More developed explanations referred to why they will last or are quite cheap. A few candidates considered the economic, social and environmental sustainability of each measure which resulted in repetitive answers which gained little extra credit.

## **Question 2**

(a)(i) Most candidates correctly identified shingle. Some candidates incorrectly suggested that slag or spoil heap was a type of beach deposit.

(a)(ii) Many candidates gave an answer within the accepted range or identified Beacon Hill as the highest point. A common error was to identify the 90 metre contour line as the highest point. A few candidates read 90 as 06 as that is how it appears on the map.

(a)(iii) Many candidates identified that the slope was steeper in grid square 9210. If candidates did not score this mark it was usually because they failed to make a comparison or compared height not slope.

(b)(i) Most candidates correctly identified two pieces of evidence from the photograph. The most common answers were stump, headland, cliff and debris on the beach. Some candidates incorrectly explained why erosion might have occurred.

(b)(ii) Many candidates answered this question well. They named and described two processes succinctly. The most common answers focussed on hydraulic action and abrasion. Some candidates did not match the term with the correct description, but still scored two marks. Some candidates confused corrosion and corrasion. Incorrect answers included description of longshore drift and transportation, and weathering.

(c) This was a challenging question which focused on geology. This term was not understood by a minority of candidates who focused their answers on processes such as longshore drift or erosion. Many candidates interpreted geology as differences in the resistance of rock. They focused on hard and soft rocks but weaker candidates did not develop this idea to relate the difference in hardness to landforms. Where candidates did relate resistance or rock type to

landforms such as headlands and bays they achieved maximum marks. There were many excellent answers which described concordant and discordant coastlines with their associated landforms.

(d) Whilst many candidates gave good explanations of beach formation the best answers related this process to the example from the OS map extract. Candidates approached this answer in different ways, some focused on constructive waves whilst other concentrated on longshore drift. Whilst the latter approach was more popular, longshore drift was not explained in detail by many candidates who did not refer to details such as the prevailing wind affecting the direction of swash. Answers which were not credited included the beach was artificial and made from material dredged from offshore.

(e) Many candidates had learned a detailed case study. Many different examples were used from around the coast of the UK. The most commonly described coastal management schemes were at Holderness, Hengistbury Head and Pevensy Bay. The name of a town where management has occurred was accepted as an alternative to the name of an area of coastline. Answers focused on both soft and hard engineering strategies, with the best including at least three different methods. Management strategies were usually better described than the explanation of their sustainability. Some candidates explained sustainability in words such as 'these measures are expensive' and 'these methods will last longer'. More developed explanations referred to why they will last or are expensive. Better answers compared the different strategies in relation to their sustainability and gave details of cost.

### **Question 3**

(a)(i) Whilst many candidates worked out the correct percentage, some candidates calculated an inaccurate percentage.

(a)(ii) Accurate data was required to gain credit. The question required comparison between the percentages, but this was omitted from weaker answers.

(a)(iii) Many candidates correctly identified two aspects of the population pyramid with reference to the overall shape or base or apex. Many candidates answered in terms of more or less people or higher proportions in different age groups. This was acceptable as an alternative way of describing the structure. A minority of candidates did not understand the concept of population structure. Their answers referred to birth-rate, death-rate, life expectancy or changing proportions over time. These answers were not credited. Some candidates explained why the population pyramid was this shape rather than identifying features of its structure.

(a)(iv) Candidates needed to examine the evidence of the population pyramid to see the trend of decreasing proportions in younger age groups. Many candidates who recognised the decreasing trend gave excellent explanations. Answers usually included reference to contraception and family planning, fewer requirements for children to work, and changing attitudes in society. A small number of candidates wrote about change without specifying what it was, which made it difficult to gain much credit.

(b) Many different ideas were suggested for variation in life expectancy. Most candidates included ideas about health care but better candidates included other suggestions related to water supply, diet, hygiene and working conditions. Some weaker answers stated opposites such as 'there is good health care in MEDCs and poor health care in LEDCs', which only gained one mark.

(c) Many candidates produced good answers to this question which is very topical. The question discriminated well as candidates needed to develop their ideas to score maximum marks. The most common suggestions for consequence were based on more pensions, increasing taxes, healthcare, demand for specialist services and the need to work longer.

(d) Many candidates wrote a detailed case study answer. China was the country of choice for most candidates, but answers were also written about Thailand and the pro-natalist policies of Italy and France. A focus which was not accepted was immigration into the UK. Candidates knew details of population management strategies in China, including both the 'longer, later, fewer' policy and the 'one child policy'. A feature of better answers was the evaluation of the success of these policies. Outcomes such as gender imbalance, '4-2-1' families and 'little emperor syndrome' were considered. Comprehensive answers also contained data which illustrated the declining birth and fertility rates. Answers which focused on other countries often lacked detail which characterised the answers about China.

#### **Question 4**

(a)(i) Nearly all candidates correctly identified Lagos.

(a)(ii) Many candidates compared the growth of the two cities, often using 'only' as a comparator rather than 'more' or 'greater'. Better answers also included data to support the statement. Some candidates quoted inaccurate figures from the graph. Candidates needed to compare the growth and not just write two separate accounts about Tokyo and Lagos.

(b) Most candidates scored two marks on this question. The most common answers focused on employment, shops and services, education and health care.

(c) Many candidates showed good knowledge of the locations of squatter settlements, most often describing locations of the edge of a city, a hillside or on derelict land within the city. Their explanations for these locations varied in quality. Some candidates gave the same explanation for both locations, but this was not credited twice. The most common explanation was land availability, but 'cheaper land' was not accepted. A few candidates misinterpreted 'location' and wrote about individual cities or countries.

(d) Although candidates were very familiar with the problems for residents of living in a squatter settlement, they were not always able to focus their answer onto the problem for the city council. Weaker answers referred to the common problems of waste, cramped conditions and lack of services but did not consider how the council might try to manage these issues or how they might impact on the city as a whole. Better candidates made this link which made the question a good discriminator.

(e) The change in focus from LEDC to MEDC cities posed few problems for candidates. The idea of counter-urbanisation was explained in the question which led most candidates to suggest realistic consequences. These suggestions included the growth of rural settlements, the effects of commuting and impacts on the rural environment. Many candidates suggested a number of consequences but did not develop their ideas, as required by the question. A small minority of candidates incorrectly focused their answer on the city and so wrote about the run-down nature of the city, loss of jobs, and economic recession.

(f) The case study was less well-answered than others on the paper. Candidates did not write in as much detail as other topics they had learned. Where candidates knew place detail they wrote comprehensive answers about the change and why it had occurred. Most candidates were more confident in describing changes than they were in giving reasons for them. The most commonly referred to change was the development of an out-of-town shopping centre, typically Bluewater, Meadowhall or Cribbs Causeway. Some candidates used the opportunity to write excellent accounts of changes in retail provision in their local area. Weaker answers described

the changes but then looked at the impact of these changes on other shopping areas in the city, which was not the focus of the question. Also some candidates wrote about the historical development of shopping in their local town, which took a long time to reach the 'recent' element required by the question.

### **Question 5**

(a)(i) Nearly all candidates scored a mark for the basic idea of 'lack of rain' and better answers also referred to a long period of time.

(a)(ii) The skill of describing distribution is a good discriminator. The best answers considered each category in turn and described their location in detail. Many answers did not focus on specific categories but wrote about risk areas in general. This approach tended to result in vague answers. A few candidates did not focus on Africa but attempted to describe the world distribution. Also candidates included 'no risk' areas in their distribution which was not required by the question. Weak answers were often typified by reference to the 'country' of Africa and to 'top' and 'bottom' of Africa.

(b) Many different ideas were suggested, the most common being related to farming, and household use. Many strategies were suggested for water conservation, in particular a hosepipe ban. Weaker answers only suggested domestic effects which limited the mark. A smaller number of candidates answered with a focus on LEDCs which was not applicable. There was some confusion between the effects of drought and the effects of a heat wave.

(c) Many candidates concentrated on two ideas: that LEDCs are not equipped to deal with drought, and that drought affects livestock or arable farming which then impacts on the livelihood of farmers or food supplies in the area. These ideas allowed better candidates to score up to maximum marks.

(d) Although candidates were very familiar with the problems for residents of living in a squatter settlement, they were not always able to focus their answer onto the problem for the city council. Candidates needed to consider how the council might try to manage issues such as the common problems of waste, cramped conditions and lack of services and how these issues might impact on the city as a whole. Better candidates made this link which made the question a good discriminator. Credit is not awarded on both occasions if candidates included opposites, for example 'people in MEDCs can afford to buy water, and people in LEDCs cannot afford to buy water'.

(e) Although there were many different ideas that could be used to answer this question many answers were rather negative and did not appreciate the benefits of the appropriate technologies shown. Answers often included ideas that the storage tank was dependant on rainfall and so may not be appropriate, and there was the possibility of disease in stored water. Fewer candidates wrote that the storage tank was affordable or low maintenance. There was a misconception that the water pump would be too expensive and rely on foreign support to make it work. Stronger candidates appreciated the long-term benefit of gaining access to underground water supplies.

(f) There was a wide range of answers to the case study question. A small number misinterpreted the question and wrote about a tectonic hazard for which they gained no credit. Other candidates focused on flooding which had to be related to a climatic hazard; otherwise no credit was given for the causes. Candidates who wrote about the floods in Bangladesh gained credit where flooding was linked to a cyclone or monsoon rainfall. The causes of tropical storms were better understood than the causes of drought. Many candidates chose cyclone Nargis as their case study and wrote in detail about its causes and effects. Generally candidates developed the effects of the natural hazard better than the causes. Candidates who chose a drought case study did not usually include as much detail. Many weaker answers suggested the

drought was caused because 'it did not rain' rather than explaining why it did not rain. Some candidates did not develop effects beyond simple statements about famine and disease. Often these candidates wrote about drought in 'Africa'. There were excellent, detailed case studies of the causes and effects of drought in the Sahel. A small number of candidates incorrectly focused their case study on an MEDC, particularly Hurricane Katrina in the USA. Although they wrote excellent answers there was a limit to the mark awarded.

### **Question 6**

(a)(i) Many candidates were successful in describing distribution. Stronger candidates used appropriate terminology such as central, clustered and northern rather than having a more vague answer. Some weaker answers were incorrectly focused on explanation. Some candidates did not refer to or did not understand the scale of the map because they stated that volcanoes were not located near plate boundaries.

(a)(ii) Most candidates could suggest examples of information recorded at the observation centres but only better candidates could explain how this information could help to predict an eruption. Some answers made the error of repeating the same explanation for both examples. A common misconception was that the observation centres would detect tectonic plate movement.

(a)(iii) Most candidates had some understanding of the processes which cause a volcanic eruption at a destructive margin. The better candidates sequenced the process clearly and wrote with precision. Other candidates missed out part of the process but still showed a clear understanding of the process. The weakest part of many answers was the stage from subduction to eruption. Many candidates chose to draw a diagram as part of their answer. Although many of these diagrams were well drawn and annotated they tended to repeat what the candidate wrote beneath. It was not necessary to do both. One positive aspect of many diagrams was the indication by arrows that the plates were converging. This was often not stated in the written explanation. A small minority of answers described a divergent or conservative margin.

(b) Many candidates scored both marks. The three main suggestions which candidates referred to were advice, education and preparation.

(c) Most candidates were very familiar with reasons why people live near earthquakes. Many reasons were suggested and the main differentiation between answers was in the level of development. The most commonly suggested reasons were soil fertility and jobs, but these ideas were often not sufficiently developed to gain the second mark. Statements such as 'fertile soils are good for farming' and 'there are lots of jobs in tourism' scored only one mark. Ideas which lead more easily into development marks were family ties, ignorance of the volcano and poverty.

(d) The most popular case studies of earthquakes were Haiti and Sichuan. Popular case studies of volcanoes were Nevado del Ruiz and Pinatubo. Candidates described the effects in more detail than attempts to reduce the effects. Many candidates gave detailed effects specific to the event. Weaker candidates named and located the hazard but gave general descriptions which could have applied to most natural disasters. Some candidates wrote about what could be done after the event, particularly earthquake-proofing houses, but were unable to evaluate the success of these measures. Other candidates described strategies which were wildly optimistic. However, better answers included a touch of realism by recognising that it was very difficult to reduce effects in some countries. They referred to the lack of progress which had been made in Haiti. Weaker candidates focused on when and why the earthquake or volcano occurred, which was largely irrelevant. A few candidates chose an example from an MEDC, notably Etna, and Sendai, Japan. Others chose an example of a climatic hazard which was incorrect.

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