

GCSE

Geography B

General Certificate of Secondary Education **J385**

OCR Report to Centres June 2014

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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.

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B561/01 Sustainable Decision Making (Foundation Tier)

General Comments

This is the first SDME paper without pre-release material. It was encouraging, therefore, to see that the paper allowed candidates to achieve a wide range of marks, including a significant number of candidates who achieved over 30 marks. The majority of candidates seemed to be appropriately entered for Foundation Level, but there were still some candidates who would have probably coped very well with the Higher Tier, which is a little disappointing to see as it restricts the achievement of these candidates. The majority of candidates could provide answers to all the questions and there were few rubric errors or No Response (NR) answers.

The quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar continue to be of concern. Key Terms are often incorrectly spelt, even though in many cases they are in the resource booklet. Poor handwriting makes the work of some candidates difficult to read and so difficult to mark. Candidates should be encouraged to ensure that their work is clear and legible.

There were a number of candidates who seemed to have some difficulty in recognising a continent, as opposed to a country, and in correctly identifying information from a key to a map. It cannot be emphasised enough that basic geography must be taught alongside the more technical aspects of the subject.

Centres are still providing candidates with additional sheets when the answer paper itself has additional pages that are, for the most part, more than adequate for a candidate's extended answers. The use of additional sheets makes the online marking system more difficult to manage and examiners would appreciate it if centres could discourage invigilation teams from handing out unnecessary additional sheets. Candidates need to be reminded to label clearly any additional work.

With only one Level of Response marked question on this paper, few candidates failed to achieve marks on all sections of the paper. It is still advisable, however, that the topic area covered by the DME is taught thoroughly as candidates often fail to go beyond the most basic of development points and rarely link their thoughts to actual examples, beyond those given in the resource booklet. This lack of background knowledge holds candidates back and stops them achieving the highest levels in the decision section of the paper.

Comments on Individual Questions

1. Most candidates achieved full marks on this question.
 - (a) The majority of candidates correctly identified Hurricanes as the answer. A few candidates named a different type of tropical storm.
 - (b) The majority of candidates correctly identified the location of the storms.
 - (c) The majority of candidates correctly identified an appropriate continent. However, a number gave the name of a country rather than a continent. Any compass points given for a correctly named continent (e.g. SE Asia) were discounted.

2. Most candidates achieved full marks for this question.
 - (a) A significant number of candidates gave an incorrect response. This tended to be where the candidate gave the opposite direction as their answer.
 - (b) Most candidates identified the correct range or a number within this range.
 - (c) A majority of candidates were able to identify, from the resource, two different types of damage.
3. Many candidates were able to score well on this question, with almost 70% of candidates scoring 4 or more marks.
 - (a) Most candidates gave the correct figure from the map. Those who did not, often gave the answer as 'more than 800'.
 - (b) Many candidates did well on this question, with some excellent answers showing development of ideas. The majority of candidates scored at least 3 marks and all elements of the indicative content were covered across the range of answers given.
4. Well over 50% of candidates scored full marks on this question. They correctly identified the key points in the resource which allowed them to access both the base mark and the development point. Where candidates failed to achieve this, they tended to struggle for the development mark on the transport aspect of the question.
5. The majority of candidates were able to achieve at least 3 marks on this question.
 - (a) Many candidates struggled to gain full marks on this question. On many occasions candidates identified methods that would provide protection, but not the *ways in which the shelter would protect people*. The best answers gave the method e.g. Built with reinforced concrete and then explained that this would allow the shelter to withstand the high winds and not get blown down. Similarly, sound explanations were given for Steel Shutters and Platform/Stilts.
 - (b) Most candidates were able to gain one mark for each chosen option, but there were few who offered development for both choices.
6. As this paper had no pre-release material, this exam was a true test of a candidate's knowledge of the topic area. It was a little disappointing to see a general lack of use of exemplar material from other tropical storms that have hit the headlines; however, candidates did use the resource booklet well. The majority of candidates were able to score at least half marks on this section of the paper.
 - (a) The majority of candidates were able to attain at least level 2 with simplistic reasons given as to why their choice was the best idea. Candidates selected all the options with an almost equal spread. The very best answers were able to relate their choice to another example e.g. Hurricane Katrina or to fully understand how the various sections of the Method would link together to provide the best solution. Many candidates still refer to types of sustainability without fully explaining what they mean. It is not enough to say a Method is economically sustainable with no further explanation. Where a candidate failed to achieve on this question the candidate tended to give reasons for their rejected choices rather than positive aspects of their chosen option.

For Method 1, good answers focused on being able to know when and where a storm is likely to hit, along with its likely strength, which by means of the use of a variety of methods of communication would allow people to make informed and timely decisions about evacuating.

For Method 2, the best answers focused on the lack of damage to buildings and no requirement to evacuate due to the physical barriers; the ability of mangrove forests to reduce the impact of the storm surge; the money and lifesaving effects this would have in the long term.

For Method 3, good answers looked at the long term benefits this method would have as education cascaded through generations; the short term effects of people knowing what to do; having emergency supplies to get them through an event without loss of life.

- (b)** Most candidates were able to recognise one or two disadvantages of their chosen Method. Cost was most frequently given as a disadvantage and was often well developed. However, a significant number of candidates gave advantages of other options rather than disadvantages of their chosen Method. As the question asked for disadvantages, development was not a requirement in the mark scheme as up to 3 separate disadvantages could be credited, however, development of one point could be recognised.
- (c)** This question was not generally well answered as candidates were often unable to develop their explanation as to why they rejected the other Methods. It was often seen that the candidate would continue to focus on why their chosen Method was better.
- (d)** Very few candidates scored more than a single mark here, although the question often elicited the longest responses. Many candidates agreed that all three Methods would have some sort of synergy which would result in fewer deaths, but few were able to develop this further. Many detailed answers were seen which just gave the benefits of each Method in turn, but with no links between them.

B561/02 Sustainable Decision Making (Higher Tier)

General Comments

There was evidence of good preparation for the examination and candidates of all abilities were able to access the resources with good use being made of them for all of the questions. Many candidates used their knowledge and understanding of cyclones, especially in relation to questions 3 and 5, often quoting Hurricane Katrina and Cyclone Nargis. Candidates gain more credit when they adapt the resource material to support their answers rather than copying directly from them. The rubric was followed with few errors. The full range of marks was seen. There were very few instances where candidates failed to answer a question. The majority of candidates completed the paper and there was little evidence that any were short of time. The majority of candidates responded to both bullet points in question 5. Candidates should be reminded that developing one or two ideas will gain more credit than stating a range of ideas on Levels of Response questions such as questions 3 and 5.

The standard of written work was good overall and acceptable for the weaker candidates. Candidates need to be encouraged to use paragraphs in their answers. Most candidates showed a good understanding of the subject matter and were able to use appropriate geographical terminology, such as sustainability, with understanding. Examples of this were seen in questions 2 and 5. Candidates need to be reminded of the need to read the wording of questions carefully so they understand their individual demands. This was particularly relevant for questions 3, 4 and 5. Candidates need to be made aware that the demands of question 5 do vary between examination sessions and that there is no general format which they can follow in order to answer it. Question 3 asked for comparison of effectiveness of evacuation between a MEDC and a LEDC and for such questions, candidates need to be reminded of the need to link the two rather than treat them in isolation.

Comments on Individual Questions

Question 1

This question was generally well answered with candidates describing changes to the wind speed and direction of the cyclone along its route. The majority of candidates were credited at 3/4 or 4/4. A small number of candidates described the route from land to sea and so were not credited. Most candidates used wind speeds and compass directions effectively. Those candidates who scored full marks covered both changes in wind speed and direction along the route of the cyclone, indicating clearly whereabouts on the route they occurred. Those scoring two or three out of four marks tended to concentrate only on changes to the wind speed. Candidates gained no credit for describing the dynamics of the cyclone. Effective use was made of the relevant resources by the majority of candidates.

Question 2

This question required candidates to use the data from the relevant resources and suggest why the number of deaths from the cyclone varied between districts. The highest scoring answers named two or more districts, stated their respective number of deaths and gave a range of possible causes which they were able to develop. The main causes were track of the cyclone (and so its relative strength), location of the district (inland or coastal), population density and quality of buildings. Too many candidates focused their answer on Chittagong and did not compare the district with another. The mark scheme limited their score to Level 2 maximum three marks. Common misinterpretation of the key was density of population which was mistaken for number of deaths for example 800 died rather than 800 per sq km and reference to

districts as countries, cities or provinces. A minority of candidates, in their answer, gave general descriptions of possible causes of death such as poverty and height above sea level but failed to link these to any districts.

Question 3

This question required candidates to compare the effectiveness of evacuation between an MEDC and Bangladesh and was generally well answered. The higher scoring responses were those where the candidate had used ideas such as modes of transport, quality of road systems and insurance. For example, cars and buses are able to carry large numbers of people away from the danger zone quickly and were mainly available in the USA and not Bangladesh where many did not have access to motorised transport. This was then linked to the developed idea of numerous better quality road links in the USA as opposed to the narrow dirt tracks that are found in many rural parts of Bangladesh. Most candidates were able to compare, to a varying extent, and were therefore credited at Levels 2 and 3 with 4/6 marks being the most common mark credited. Candidates scoring fewer marks often concentrated on one of the areas at the expense of the other or gave two separate accounts, making little attempt to link them, as well as relying on material lifted from the resource. Candidates who made reference to prediction and warning systems were credited only when they were linked to evacuation.

Question 4

The majority of candidates chose three recommendations and were able to explain how they would make sure that more people use the shelters. Most candidates scored four or five marks at Level 2. The choice of shelters containing a “killa” often saw the most detailed answers. Reference was made to keeping the cattle safe as they were a source of food and money for the 63% of the population who were farmers. This was often linked to the fact that they were unable to insure their animals against loss and so, with their livelihood intact, they could continue with their farming activities in the aftermath of the cyclone. The recommendation for a tarmacked access road was not credited if referenced to motorised transport as resource material indicated there was a lack of this in the country. Those candidates who chose the recommendation for separate facilities for males and females often focused on hygiene and personal safety as their reasons. There were some good answers to this choice relating to cultural and religious issues. Weaker candidates were able to give simple reasons for their three choices such as “being easier to get to” so gained credit at Level 1. The focus of the question was about how people could be encouraged to use the shelters so those candidates concentrating their answer on the advantages/benefits of their choices often gained no credit.

Question 5

Most candidates covered both bullet points for this question. All three methods were chosen by candidates with no particular favourite. Too many answers followed the format from earlier examination sessions such as the advantages and disadvantages of their chosen method or views of different stakeholders which this question did not demand. Many answers started with the advantages of their chosen method and then went on to give the disadvantages of the other two methods. Another common, but incorrect approach, was for candidates to write about the social, economic and environmental sustainability of each method in turn. The best answers used comparative language to give the reasons why their chosen method was more sustainable than the other two in protecting people and communities. There were some excellent examples of candidates giving well developed ideas in their answer and being credited at Level 4. For example, a candidate choosing method 2 “physical defences” developed ideas relating to reduction in loss of life, saving homes from damage and protecting livelihoods. The answers to the second bullet point were variable. In many instances, candidates gave a higher level of response to this bullet point. Well developed ideas were given for using all three methods. For example, using method 1 would allow tracking of the cyclone so warnings could be issued in a variety of ways allowing more time for people to evacuate safely. Linking in

method 2, people would be less concerned about leaving their properties as there were various defences in place to lessen the impact of the cyclone, so they would have a home/job to return to. Finally with the education of people, using method 3, they would know what to do after the warnings were issued and where to go so reducing the risk of panic and deaths. Some candidates answered this bullet point referring to the two methods they had rejected, with some development of ideas, but only a passing mention of where their chosen method fitted in. Others failed to go beyond simple reasons why all three methods would be more effective, repeating a lot of material they had included in their answer to the first bullet point.

B562 and A771/02 Geographical Enquiry

This session for the controlled assessment for Units B562 and A771 has seen a combined entry from nearly 550 centres of approximately 30,000 candidates. This is the first session where the Geographical Enquiry has had just the one component of Fieldwork Focus.

Administration

Administration by centres continues to improve with many centres submitting their marks well in advance of the 15th of May deadline. Once again, only a few centres made errors on the MS1 forms and nearly all sent the CCS160 form promptly. The majority of centres completed assessment grids fully and included appropriate annotation on the form and on candidates' work indicating where credit was given. Only a few centres included their instruction sheet for candidates for the Fieldwork Focus. The majority of centres completed the new GCW304 form and it would help if all centres did so. This is to be recommended along with candidates indicating their word counts.

Moderation

The new enquiry, without the Geographical investigation, requires an increased word limit of 2000 for the Fieldwork Focus. It was obviously important that centres realised this and also the need to look at the new assessment grid carefully. A major requirement was the need to set out expectations and to collect more primary data in the field.

The Enquiry requires centres to select one Fieldwork Focus title from four. All four Fieldwork Focus titles were selected but the majority chose Coasts, or Population and Settlements. It is expected that candidates "contextualise" the title to match their study area. Most candidates did this, but some did not and as a consequence undertook general reports rather than a route to enquiry.

The majority of candidates did break down their title into 3 or 4 key questions or hypotheses, justified them and gave reasoned expectations. They also made reference to models or theories, and to how their study had relevance in a wider context. Those who did not do the above suffered from a lack of a clear focus. Many centres also located their study area in a series of annotated maps at different scales and included annotated photographs to help describe the character of their study area in detail. There is no need to give detailed definition of terms and, too often, candidates described geomorphic processes rather than apply them to their study area.

The vast majority of candidates did provide a methodology table linked to their key questions with details of their methods and a justification for them. There is a requirement for more primary data to be collected and some centres did not provide sufficient opportunities for this. They relied too much on secondary data collection. The primary data collection has to relate directly to their key questions and should go beyond basic questionnaires.

Some centres included raw data tables above their graphs and analysis, a method to be encouraged where appropriate. Most candidates presented their work in a variety of forms with different types of graphs, excellent annotated photographs, diagrams and maps. The best candidates combined maps, graphs and photographs. Unfortunately, some centres need to encourage candidates to draw a variety of graphs beyond simple bar charts.

As mentioned earlier there were some excellent examples of candidates who integrated their analysis with their maps and graphs. They gave detailed descriptions with reference to their data and also gave reasons for the patterns they saw. This allowed them to use this to help them draw substantiated conclusions. However, centres which did not have key questions often had candidates struggling to give focused substantiated conclusions.

Some centres had candidates who made evaluations of their methods on their methodology table very well. There is also a need to evaluate the success of the enquiry overall and to give realistic and detailed solutions. They also need to suggest who might be interested in their findings.

One common problem continues to be the word count, which in some centres, was exceeded significantly. This meant that their work lacked focus, precision and succinctness and centres need to ensure that students are aware of this failing. The over use of tables and text boxes needs to be avoided. It is recommended that only the methodology be presented in a table form.

Overall, there continues to be an improvement in the quality of the presentation and structure of the work produced. It was very encouraging to see candidates enthusiastically take the opportunities offered and demonstrate high levels of ICT skills. They showed initiative, imagination and independence at a high level. Once again, it was also encouraging to moderate complete pieces of work, even from weaker candidates, where they had attempted all elements of the assessment.

The majority of centres marked accurately and some responded very well to the moderator's report from last year. Adjustments to centre marks were as a result of not having a clear focus with key questions; not providing expectations and not collecting insufficient primary data. Some centres also did not have sufficient variety in their graphs.

It is important that centres read their moderator's report and act upon the advice given. It is also advisable to look at the OCR web site which will soon have examples of good practice from this year.

B563/01 Key Geographical Themes (Foundation Tier)

General Comments

The June 2014 series of the Key Geographical Themes examination saw significant changes.

Question choice was removed from the examination, meaning that candidates were required to answer all the elements of three compulsory questions.

The marks allocated to each Question increased from 25 to 30, with the addition of 3 marks for spelling, punctuation and grammar for the study sub-question bringing the total to 33. The examination total mark increased from 84 to 99, although the examination still constitutes 50% of the candidates' final GCSE grade.

The additional five marks for each Question were comprised of an application of knowledge and understanding question for four marks and an additional mark, at Level 3, awarded for the case study response. This third mark at Level 3 was allocated for additional place specific information for the case study example.

Within each question there was a more diverse coverage of the Specification Themes requiring candidates to shift their thinking from one sub theme to another as they progressed with their answers.

Overall the examination drew positive comments from both the Assistant Examiners and their Team Leaders.

All agreed that the examination was set at an appropriate level of difficulty for Foundation candidates. Many commented on what they felt was a positive experience for candidates given the numbers who attempted all parts of the Examination Questions. Examiners noted fewer 'no responses' and observed better use of time during the Examination to focus on answers which counted towards the final mark. The removal of Question choice brought about the long awaited end to rubric error. The only possible mis-use of examination time was for candidates who began an answer, crossed it out and then wrote a revised answer on the additional pages in the Examination booklet.

The total number of candidates was approximately 7,775 which saw a fall from the June 2013 peak of just over 9,000. The mean mark was higher than the 2011 and 2013 Examinations and slightly lower than the 2012 peak.

One experienced Team Leader noted "*Overall I have been impressed by the quality of the responses that I have seen.*"

Whilst an experienced Assistant Examiner commented "*I enjoyed marking the paper this year as, considering they were Foundation candidates, on the whole they performed very well. Particularly in learning the case studies, where 1g) and 3g) were often very detailed, showing a high level of factual retention.*"

As with previous Examinations, there were aspects which candidates found challenging.

The 2014 Examination made use of Ordnance Survey map extracts for two of the questions assessing a range of map interpretation skills. Many candidates were able to follow instructions and find the necessary information to score marks. However, others appeared to be unable to demonstrate the required map reading to access the information presented on an Ordnance Survey map extract.

Centres should consider the use of Ordnance Survey maps when covering UK based elements of the Specification Themes and set a variety of map reading and interpretation tasks.

Candidates should also be familiar with common examination command words through their normal learning repertoire. In particular, learning could focus on the difference between 'describe' and 'explain' so that candidates focus their thinking on the relevant elements of knowledge and understanding required.

Candidates should also know the meaning of Specification-specific vocabulary or key words in order to unlock the specific knowledge required to gain marks.

Key words that caused difficulty for candidates for the 2014 Examination were:

Question 1: headland, landform, erosion

Question 2: sustainable, urban

Question 3: factory, primary, secondary, tertiary, location, economic activity, physical environment, measures of development

It was encouraging to note that some candidates had underlined key words and/or command words. This practice can slow candidates down and get them to consider the question requirements and the exact knowledge, understanding and type of response needed. Many Assistant Examiners felt that candidates could have read the questions more carefully and made better use of the Resource Booklet to support their answers when directed to do so.

Candidates should also be aware of the two types of four mark question. Those which require two parts to the answer are more challenging in that the response needs development in terms of detail or further explanation. On other questions, four marks can be secured with four basic, valid ideas, almost in list form.

As with previous Examinations the case study questions are the key to success. Each question is split into three parts to support candidates in constructing their answers. The entire response is 'levels marked' holistically and candidates who write valid content in the 'wrong' section are fully credited. A valid named example is needed to progress beyond Level 1, and examiners may make use of the internet to check the validity of unusual or unfamiliar examples. Correct place specific detail is also checked including additional place names or number data.

Candidates and centres should note that in the 2014 Examination knowledge that would have been learned in the context of a case study was assessed via a four mark question. Examples included river and coastal landforms in Questions 1d) and 1e); causes and consequences of international migration in Questions 2b) and 2c); economic activity location factors in Question 3c and how an economic activity can damage the physical environment in Question 3d). Place specific recall was not required to access any of the marks for these questions but knowledge learned via case study revision could be applied to achieve full marks.

Following its introduction in 2103, marks were awarded for spelling, punctuation and grammar for the extended prose generated by each case study question. For Question 1g) and 3g) the most common SPaG mark was 2. Those gaining 2 for Question 2g) was lower due to the paucity of valid responses. Candidates and centres should note that a SPaG mark was only available if the answer given was relevant to the question.

Some Examiners struggled to decipher badly written answers. For some atypical scripts awarding SPaG was made difficult as Centres had not completed the cover sheets clearly enough to indicate the exact support their candidates had received.

Question 1:

Question 1 assessed the Rivers and Coasts Theme of the Specification. This was the joint highest scoring question overall and the most successfully answered case study sub-question. The Resources were an Ordnance Survey map extract of the area around Swanage with a matching geology map for south of gridline 84. There were also colour photographs of Old Harry stack and High Force waterfall.

The skills questions in part (a) required candidates to use their OS map reading and interpretation skills.

Only one third of candidates were able to correctly name Peveril Point as the headland in grid square 0478. The most common error was to name Durlston Head in grid square 0377. This could be a map reading error or hastily scanning for a word associated with headland. Three quarters of candidates were able to give the approximate length of Swanage Bay, but less than half could use the map key to identify the beach material at Studland Bay in grid square 0384. A common error was for candidates to use Fig. 1 instead of the OS map extract to incorrectly give 'sand and clay' as the beach material.

Sub-question (b) was unsuccessful in that it did not yield the obvious, simple answers for features of a coastal cliff, such as they are tall, high, vertical and made of rock. Many gave information about processes of erosion or non-geographical responses such as the 'views are great'. Credit was given to those who named arches and caves as features of coastal cliffs.

Just over half the candidates gained both marks for matching rock types and landforms for part (c) (i).

Spit was a common incorrect answer even though there is no spit shown on Fig. 1. Over half the candidates gained marks for (c) (ii), by referring to the relative hardness of one of the rock types and linking this to the rate or amount of erosion. A common error was stating that chalk was a 'softer' rock than clay and therefore easier to erode.

Sub-questions (d) and (e) focused on well known landforms and the processes which created them. Scores were higher for 1d) than 1e). Just under half the candidates correctly identified Old Harry as a stack, with stump being the most common error. The majority of candidates gained marks for part (ii). The best answers had accurate diagrams showing the correct sequence of headland erosion to create a stack. Some also included relevant information about the erosion processes. Some candidates wasted time with unnecessary detail in their diagrams or provided accurate detailed sketches of the landforms shown in Fig. 2.

Three quarters of candidates correctly identified High Force as a waterfall although understanding of the processes was less secure. Accurate diagrams showing the undercutting of a layer of soft rock, overhang collapse and the retreat of the waterfall were the most successful. Some candidates drew detailed sketches of the landform shown in Fig. 3 and misinterpreted the name 'High Force' as a process involving powerful flows of water carving through the landscape.

The landform theme continued into sub question (f). The most common correct answers were meanders and ox-bow lakes. Many candidates did not follow the 'describe' command and gave detailed accounts of the processes which create their chosen river landforms. Others missed the key word 'river' and gave coastal landforms for their answers.

The river flood case study was the best answered of the three case study sub-questions. One quarter of responses were at Level 3, with one fifth containing relevant and credible place specific detail. Less able candidates gave a generic description of flood impact with a basic cause along with a valid named example.

The most common example was the Boscastle Flood of 2004, Cockermouth and Carlisle were also popular choices, well supported with accurate impact data and rainfall figures for the causes. Bangladesh was another high scoring example with some accurate detail about impact, flood years and good coverage of multiple causes with named rivers and the Himalayas. Other non – UK examples were Mozambique, the river Zambezi and the Mississippi. Some candidates including valid up to date examples from 2014, such as Somerset, possibly drawing upon their own personal flood experiences.

Question 2

Question 2 assessed the Population and Settlement theme of the Specification. The overall scores were marginally higher than for Question 1. However, this case study question was the lowest scoring of the three case studies. The question featured only two Resources, a map showing migration routes from Africa to Europe and a simple population change line graph for Kenya.

The map skills question proved less challenging for candidates with most scoring all three marks. Part (ii) had the most errors with candidates naming settlements that were to the south of the map rather than Mogadishu which is the furthest from Spain.

Nearly all candidates scored marks for sub question (b). Lists of pull factors were most common with ideas linked to jobs, wealth, services and quality of life. Some candidates gave more sophisticated coverage of relative push factors associated with Africa. Candidates also did well on sub question (c). The most common responses referred to jobs, low wages and the perception of immigrants as willing to work hard for less pay. Some candidates considered the economic contribution of immigrants through taxation and consumption. There were also positive comments about multiculturalism and enrichment due to immigrants.

For sub question (d), candidates were more successful in explaining high birth rates with ideas linked to children as workers, high infant mortality rates and children looking after parents in later life. A common misconception was that Kenya/LEDCs do not have any contraception at all. Those who commented on access to contraception, costs or lack of awareness were given credit. Basic ideas about improved health care were given to explain declining death rates. Some candidates misread the question and gave reasons to explain high deaths.

Overpopulation was not a key word that caused difficulty with sub question (e). Most candidates were able to give clear definitions of a total population being too high for a given country or place. Nearly all candidates scored for the follow up sub-question (f) about the possible effects of overpopulation in an LEDC. Common ideas were linked to shortages of food, water, land and housing. More sophisticated responses covered the strain on health and education services. Conflict over resources was also cited along with this triggering migration to better places.

The case study focused on an example of recent planned urban change and sustainability. This was clearly the lowest scoring of the case study answers. Some candidates were able to name and describe valid examples and make relevant comments about the sustainability of the changes described. UK examples were the most common with Greenwich Millennium Village and Stratford being the most popular choices. Candidates' answers to the former had weak ideas linked to sustainable transport and energy provision whilst responses to the latter focused on the social and economic legacy of the 2012 Olympics. Other successful examples were linked to changes in retail provision featuring large developments such as The Bullring, Bluewater, Cabot's Circus and Meadow Hall. There were fewer non UK examples with Mumbai and favelas in Brazil being the most common. The latter were linked to vague ideas about change caused by the World Cup and forthcoming Olympics in 2016. One examiner did note a model answer about urban planning and sustainability focused on Curitiba in Brazil.

Just over 40% of candidates failed to gain any marks at all. Inevitably with the Population and Settlement theme a significant minority of candidates insisted on using their well learned China's One Child Policy case study. There were also candidates who wrote about LEDC aid projects and the largest number of 'no responses' for a case study question for this examination.

Question 3

This question assessed the Economic Development theme with a wide range of Resources. These included an 1:25 000 OS map extract, a location map of England and an aerial photograph all linked to sugar manufacturing. There was also a scatter graph showing changes in life expectancy and average income for selected countries. Question 3 performed less well overall although the case study responses scored higher than those for Question 2.

Question (a) was not successful. About half the candidates did not score any marks. The range of incorrect responses indicated that they had not 'studied' Fig. 6 closely enough for the correct ideas about sugar beet being a raw material and lower transport costs if the factories are located near this source. Many speculated about the climate, soils, proximity to London and export via ports not shown on the map.

Sub-question (b) also yielded mixed responses. Only two thirds of candidates knew a factory was an example of a secondary economic activity. Half were able to state a feature of the factory, with larger buildings/chimneys being most common. Just under half the candidates were able to locate and give the number of the A road required in part (iii)

Understanding of the location factors for the sugar factory was weak. Basic ideas about transport links were most common with size and relief of land also given. Many candidates showed limited map interpretation skills by referring to the 'motorways' on the OS map extract. Similarly, some stated that the factory was away from housing for pollution reasons. Closer scrutiny of the OS map extract shows housing areas adjacent to the factory site.

Sub-question (d) was the least successful question in the whole examination. Nearly half the candidates failed to score any marks. Some clearly did not understand the requirements of the question and failed to respond.

Those who gained marks gave vague ideas about factory pollution, often linked to the sugar factory featured in the other Resources. Some good examples were noted, especially those linked to primary industries such as quarrying, mining and plantations. Those with vague ideas about industry, transport and energy were able to gain further marks with credible links to greenhouse gases and global climate change.

Sub-question (e) probably saw the greatest shift in focus within a Question due to the diverse nature of the Economic Theme. However over 90% of candidates selected the correct answer for part (i). Candidates also provided some thoughtful response to the more challenging part (ii). The most able wrote sophisticated responses linking health, education and lifestyle to income and increased life expectancy.

Birth and death rate were the most common correct answers for sub-question (f) with infant mortality and adult literacy also given. Only a few candidates could give accurate definitions of their chosen measures in terms of rates per 1,000 or percentages. Some candidates misread the question and gave explanations of how their chosen measures changed over time and/or indicated how developed a country was.

This was the second most successful case study sub-question. Most candidates were able to name a multi-national company and provide some valid information about its effects in a chosen country. Over one third of candidates achieved top of Level 2 or Level 3 marks. Although only a few were able to give credible place specific detail about their chosen MNC and country.

Nike based in named south east Asian countries was by far the most common response with cheap labour being given as a location factor and an effect. Some examiners noted the exaggerated tone of some accounts of poor working conditions associated with 'sweatshop' style operations. Coca Cola in India and Apple/Foxconn in China were also popular examples. The former had some clear accounts of the environmental impact of water usage and the latter showed awareness of workers' suicides in Foxconn's factory. Some candidates also included positive effects of MNCs in LEDCs such as job creation, development of skills and technology, and contribution to national economies through taxation and the multiplier effect. Candidates who linked a named MEDC with their chosen example were less successful in giving valid location factors or effects.

Other MNCs cited were: Dyson; Fiat; Ford; MacDonalds; Primark; Toyota and Walmart. A few candidates chose to use their well learned aid project case study and consequently did not score any marks.

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. However, 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. 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. Weaker candidates sometimes decided to write all they knew about the case study, whether it was relevant or not. Relevant place detail is often the main differentiating factor between Level 2 and Level 3 case studies. Although there are a limited number of case study topics, the focus of each case study will vary from year to year. It is worth noting that some case study examples may be better than others to answer questions with a different focus, for example where there is a focus on flooding or urban change.

Examiners felt that some weaker candidates did not understand what was required in some questions because they did not take notice of key commands such as 'use map evidence' (Question 3bii) and 'compare changes' (Question 3di).

Particular areas of examination technique which candidates must practice are as follows. Centres should give their candidates the opportunity to revise and apply basic map interpretation skills which they have learned. 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.

The change in format of the question paper did not seem to have hindered candidates. Maybe the removal of question choice helped them as they no longer had to make the decision of which question they would choose to answer. There was limited evidence that candidates had evaluated questions before starting to answer them or made rough plans for their 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.

Time management was not a major issue for candidates. Some candidates lost marks by misreading or misinterpreting sections and consequently writing irrelevant answers. For example, they chose a country instead of an urban area case study in question 2, or they described how flooding could be prevented in their question 1 case study.

The award of marks for SPaG was not a major issue as most candidates were able to meet the high performance criteria in their case study answer. Where candidates omitted a case study or wrote very little their SPaG mark reflected this.

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 2015 examination, based on the revised specification.

- 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;
- Be prepared for changes of topic within the general question focus;
- 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

ai) Most candidates were able to give an accurate six figure grid reference within the range of accepted responses. A small number of candidates wrongly gave a four figure reference.

aii) Most candidates chose the correct definition of a spit.

aiii) Many candidates found this question difficult. Although most showed some familiarity with the processes of spit formation they did not explain them accurately. The process of longshore drift was not clearly explained with many answers not linking the direction of longshore drift to the prevailing wind. Some candidates explained the process of longshore drift but did not link the process to the formation of a spit. Candidates referred to deposition, and swash and backwash but did not explain their significance in the formation of a spit. Only the better candidates were able to link these separate strands together to produce a coherent explanation. Occasionally candidates gave a detailed description of a spit which was not asked for. A small minority of candidates used a diagram in their answer which usually aided their explanation. Correct ideas which were in better answers included the action of constructive waves depositing material, the influence of the wind on the recurved end of the spit, and material being moved along the coast. Some weaker candidates thought that a spit was formed by erosional processes and the spit was the remains of a cliff.

b) This question was well answered by many candidates. Although few candidates referred to a discordant coastline many did correctly identify the hard and soft rock types from the map and linked these to the formation of headlands and bays, showing good knowledge of geology and landforms. Some candidates who correctly identified the rock types failed to link these to the formation of the features. The answers of weaker candidates were characterised by poor terminology such as referring to 'rocks sticking out' rather than a headland. Some candidates did not study the resource carefully and so explained the formation of caves, arches, stacks and stumps.

c) The formation of the waterfall was generally explained well by candidates. Most were able to explain the process and usually identified specific erosional process as required, usually abrasion and hydraulic action. Some candidates had specific knowledge of High Force waterfall and identified the rock types, although this was not required to gain credit. Some answers included an explanation of how a gorge is formed, which was not required by the question. Some candidates included diagrams which usually helped their explanation, especially if they were labelled. Some candidates explained erosional processes but did not link these to the formation of the waterfall. The poorest answers referred to methods of transportation rather than erosion, and confused waterfalls with cliffs and therefore wrote about marine processes forming a wave-cut notch.

di) Many candidates described a floodplain accurately. Good answers identified the ideas that a floodplain is flat land, on either side of a river, and is an area that will be potentially flooded by the river. Some candidates also made reference to deposits of silt or alluvium which would be found there. A common misconception was that a floodplain is designed to control flooding or allowed to flood to protect other areas, rather than being a natural feature. Some candidates incorrectly focused on the use of a floodplain rather than its natural features.

dii) This question discriminated well. Good answers identified the location of fast and slow flow in a meander and linked this to erosion and deposition. As with earlier questions a minority of candidates illustrated their answer with a labelled diagram which reinforced or developed their written ideas. Weaker candidates confused the processes operating on the inner and outer banks of a meander. Some answers included the development of an ox-bow lake which was not required. A minority of candidates focused on why a river starts to bend in its course which gained credit, but these answers also needed to explain the processes happening on the bend.

e) The case study answer was the best of the three overall. The most popular examples were rivers Valency and Ganges, although other common examples included Zambezi, Derwent, Eden and Severn. Many candidates included detailed knowledge about their chosen example which accessed the higher levels. Some answers were characterised by detailed information but lacked place specific references and so failed to score the highest marks. Weaker answers were characterised by inaccurate or exaggerated details about the effects. Answers which did not name the river were limited to Level 2, the most usual example where this happened was failing to name a river which was flooded at Boscastle and occasionally at other towns in the UK such as Carlisle and Cockermonth. More able candidates were able to explain in detail the causes of the river flood, whereas weaker candidates focused on the impacts. Good answers included appropriate terminology such as antecedent rainfall, impermeable surfaces and interception. Some candidates went into detail about subsequent flood prevention measures which were not required by the question.

Question 2

a) Many better candidates identified patterns of migration whereas weaker answers tended to list migration routes or list settlements without identifying patterns. Candidates identified routes through the Sahara, movement north and destinations in named European countries. Weak answers incorrectly focused on settlements from where migration originated. Some candidates seemed to misread the question and gave reasons for migration.

b) Many candidates answered the question well. Differentiation was achieved by the extent to which a factor was developed. Common factors which were identified included higher wages or better jobs, improved level of healthcare and education. Examples of weak development included 'to live a better life' and 'to make money'. Some weaker answers included the same development for two different factors. A minority of candidates focused incorrectly on push factors. These were usually the same factors affecting migration but given the wrong emphasis.

Weaker candidates also identified a pull factor but developed it as a push factor, such as ‘better healthcare because healthcare facilities in Africa are poor’.

c) This question was generally answered well by candidates who read the question correctly and focused their ideas on the effects of migration in the country which people had left. The main effects which were identified were, loss of workers as young people left and the subsequent effects on the economy, the ageing population of the country and its requirements, and the consequences of an unbalanced gender structure. Unfortunately, some candidates explained effects on the country to which people migrated and so missed the focus of the question.

d) Many candidates gave acceptable reasons for a declining death rate in a country. The most commonly suggested reason was improvement in healthcare, but other popular ideas included clean water supply, improved diet and better sanitation. Generally differentiation was achieved by the extent to which the idea was developed. Weaker candidates often repeated the same development for two ideas. Some candidates misread the question and suggested reasons for an increase in the death rate or a decline in the birth rate, highlighting the importance of reading the question carefully.

e) The term ‘overpopulation’ was generally well defined. Occasionally candidates mixed it up with overcrowding but most identified the relationship between people and resources. If definitions were incomplete it was usually because candidates gained one mark for the idea of ‘too many people’ but did not develop the definition by referring to a lack of resources to cope with the population. Weak candidates confused overpopulation with high population density.

f) The effects of overpopulation were explained by many candidates with different degrees of development. The most common effects which were suggested included food shortage, lack of clean water, shortage of housing and unemployment. Candidates successfully developed these ideas by referring to famine, outbreak of diseases such as dysentery, squatter settlements and family poverty.

g) The case study answer was the worst of the three overall. Many individual developments were chosen as examples, including Greenwich Millennium Village, the Olympic Park in Stratford, Meadowhall, Canary Wharf, Gorbals, various former dockland areas including Salford and Glasgow, and Rochina and Curitiba in Brazil. The examples from London were the most common, although some candidates mixed up and amalgamated their ideas about different developments in the city. Description of change was usually more developed and detailed than explanation of the change in land use. Answers which failed to include developed explanation could not reach the highest level. Better explanations usually consisted of a description of previous or original land use in the area and an explanation of why the area had declined or needed to be re-developed. Many explanations were linked to social improvement and sustainability. Some candidates took a whole city as their example and then focused their answer on different areas of the city such as the CBD and out-of-town shopping centres. However, answers which focused on retail developments such as Meadowhall tended to have detailed description but little explanation for the development. Answers which focused on developments local to the candidates varied in quality, often depending on the scale of change. Weaker candidates placed too much focus on the effects or impacts of change rather than explaining why the change took place.

Question 3

a) Many candidates realised that the factories are located in the sugar beet growing area but few realised the importance of transporting the bulky raw material. Many candidates copied the sentence from the resource but did not link the idea to location. Weaker candidates referred to coastal location which is not shown on the map. Some candidates did not relate their answer to the map but gave general reasons for factory location.

bi) This question was challenging. The correct direction was the most common answer but many other directions were suggested. Some candidates showed little understanding of the skill required and gave answers such as bird's eye view, downwards, from right to left, from above, or from the side.

bii) Most candidates used map evidence as required, although a minority ignored that instruction. The most common evidence given by candidates referred to the main roads, Bury St Edmunds (although many candidates just referred to it as the town or urban area), the local farms and an area of open or flat land. Candidates then explained why they might affect the factory location using ideas such as easy transport of raw materials or products, local workforce, access to raw materials and room to build or expand the factory. Weaker answers contained a number of misconceptions or errors. Candidates referred to a motorway or the A35 or A30 which are named in the key rather than identifying road numbers from the map. Some candidates interpreted the evidence incorrectly, for example that the road links in the area would benefit workers travelling to the factory. Weaker candidates referred to 'good roads' rather than main roads, they made reference to 'transport' with no detailed map evidence. Some candidates thought that the plantations shown on the map were the growing areas.

c) The question differentiated well and gave further evidence of the need to read the question carefully. Some candidates ignored the instruction 'for one other economic activity' and wrote about sugar manufacturing. This gained no credit, although answers about manufacturing were acceptable. Better candidates used a specific example which they had studied, such as a palm oil plantation, tourism, farming or forestry. They were then able to give developed ideas about the impacts of the activity on the environment. Answers which suggested general economic activities such as transport or factory were characterised by vague responses. Some candidates did not make it clear what their chosen activity was. Other errors included a focus on local people (suggesting visual impact or eyesore) or economy rather than the physical environment. Deforestation was sometime named as the activity rather than logging.

di) The quality of answers were variable. The best answers made a clear comparison between changes in life expectancy in the two countries supported by accurate statistics. Weaker answers did not compare or use data appropriately, often misreading the graph. Some candidates included irrelevant reference to income.

dii) The question proved to be a good discriminator. Many candidates focused their answer on reasons such as improvements in diet or food supply, healthcare, clean water supply and education. As in other questions the degree of development often differentiated between the quality of the answer. Weaker candidates wrote little beyond the basic idea. A minority of candidates misunderstood or misread the question to relate the ideas to the change shown on the graph which is an increase in income and life expectancy. These candidates incorrectly wrote about change from the point of view of low or decreasing average income producing a fall in life expectancy.

e) This proved to be a challenging question with many candidates being vague in their answers. These were characterised by ideas about help and development in LEDCs with no specific detail of what this might be. The better answers referred to specific examples of aid including short-term aid to respond to a natural disaster or long-term aid to help farmers or to improve water supply. Many good answers also included details about specific development aid, maybe linked to a particular project such as Goat Aid or an HEP scheme. Weaker candidates identified an advantage such as improving education but did not explain how this could be achieved. There were vague answers about providing food or water but no link to the specific reason why this might be required. Candidates wrote about 'helping the country to develop' without explaining how this might be done for farming, industry or infrastructure. Other unacceptable answers included 'it's free' and 'it helps to improve the lives of people'.

f) Many candidates gave well developed ideas about their chosen MNC. The main weakness in the answer of many candidates was a lack of any specific place detail about their chosen example. Answers could have related to many different MNCs in many countries. The most common choice of MNC was Nike. Other popular examples included Coca Cola, Walmart, Toyota, Fiat, Apple and McDonalds. Nike's location in Vietnam was the most popular choice which provided good case study material about reasons for location in the country and effects on people and the country as a whole. The only failing in many answers was a lack of place detail. Many candidates focused their answers on sweatshops and how they affected workers. Generally candidates found more difficulty in explaining the reasons for location in many countries. Only the best candidates showed a clear understanding of globalisation. Better answers were also characterised by including positive as well as negative effects, and an understanding of how these had changed over time in terms of the economy, society and environment.

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