

GCSE

Geography B

General Certificate of Secondary Education (Short Course) **J085**

OCR Report to Centres June 2016

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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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A771/02 Geographical Enquiry

General Comments:

In this ninth and penultimate session for entry for this specification for controlled assessment for B562 and A771 there has been a combined entry of nearly centres 500 and over 30000 candidates.

Administration

Administration by centres continues to be good with many centre's submitting their marks well in advance of the 15th of May deadline. There were only a few MS1 errors and nearly all centres sent their CCS160 forms promptly and many included the GCW304 form for individual candidates. Most centres completed assessment grids fully and included appropriate teacher comments on forms and indicated where credit was given. A few centres are point marking and not assessing holistically. This should not be done as assessment criteria do not carry equal weighting.

Moderation

The enquiry involves centres selecting one Fieldwork Focus title from four. The Fieldwork Focus titles were all selected but, the majority were Coasts, with Rivers then Settlements and Economic having significant numbers. It is expected that centres "contextualise" the title to match their study area. The vast majority of centres did this well. Those who did not had studies which undertook a report structure and not a route to enquiry with a clear focus.

Centres did break down their title into 3 or 4 key questions or hypotheses, justified them and gave reasoned expectations. Some centres however, did not define sustainability and missed the opportunity to have questions relating to economic, environmental and social sustainability. Many made references to models, e.g. Egan Wheel and how their study had relevance in the UK and wider afield. Those centres that did not do the above did suffer from a lack of a clear focus for their candidates. Most centres located their study area in a series of maps at different scales with photographs and aerial photographs. However, some candidates did not annotate or even refer to them in their written work. This is needed to give a sense of place and the character of the study area. There is no need to give risk assessments and to define terms as this reduces the word count unnecessarily.

The vast majority of centres continue to provide a methodology table linked to their key questions with details of their methods and a justification for them. Most candidates suggested mainly primary data techniques from fieldwork with some supporting secondary sources. Questionnaires were commonly used, but some were too simplistic with yes/no answers only. Some candidates suggested a wide range of techniques, but only carried out a few of those mentioned. Most centres provided raw data tables and some candidates, included them next to their graphs and analysis, a method to be encouraged. Most candidates presented their work in a variety of forms with graphs, maps, sketches, photographs well annotated. Some combined these with their analysis for each site they studied in an effective way. Thankfully most candidates drew proportional symbols and not just one type of bar or pie chart. Some candidates successfully used statistical techniques such as Spearman rank to help analyse their data.

The analysis of their data was done well by candidates who had identified key questions and identified patterns with reference to data and suggested reasons. Some candidates did this in far too much detail and exceeded the word limit as a consequence. Most centres had candidates returning to their key questions and used their analysis to give substantiated conclusions. Those who did not lacked focus and their conclusions tended to be general. Many candidates included the evaluation of their methods in their methodology table. In general candidates gave critical evaluations and suggested realistic solutions to improve and extend their enquiry. Many suggested who might be interested in their findings.

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It was encouraging to see fewer candidates exceeding the prescribed 2000 word limit and centres recognising this in their marking. It is important to mention again that the use of tables and text boxes should be restricted to the methodology table and annotations.

Overall there continues to be an improvement in the quality of work produced and the use of ICT to give a sense of place for their study area. There were many candidates who showed initiative, imagination and independence at a high level.

The vast majority of centres marked accurately and some responded very well to the advice given from their moderator in previous reports. Once again those that were adjusted were because they did not have a clear focus with key questions, had not given expectations and had collected insufficient primary data. Some centres also did not have sufficient variety in their graphs.

It is important that centres read their moderators report and act upon advice given. It is also advisable to look at the OCR web site which has examples of work.

A772/01 (Foundation Tier)

General Comments:

The Principal Examiner and Assistant Examiner both agreed that the 2016 Examination was appropriate for candidates entered at Foundation level. The A772 01 Examination continues to be characterised by a small entry of candidates (88) skewed towards the less able. However, both Examiners were impressed by the quality of some candidate's performance, especially in response to elements of the Rivers and Coasts question. Conversely there were four candidates this year who did not attempt any of the questions in the whole examination.

Question 2 assessed the Economic Development Theme, this was also Question 3 on the full course examination B563 01. Candidates for A772 01 scored lower marks than their B563 01 counterparts both overall and on all parts of Question 2. Whilst the sample sizes are significantly different, Centres should be aware that the standards applied to the marking and grading of both papers are exactly the same.

Some candidates made good use of the Resources to guide them through the content transitions within questions. For Question 1, Fig. 2 signalled the transition from Coasts to Rivers. For Question 2, Fig 12 marked the transition from employment structure and economic development to aid. For three and four marker questions they used the Resources to trigger and select appropriate knowledge and understanding to focus on relevant and concise responses. Most candidates made good use of the OS map extract for Question 1a) showing that they were able to use: four figure grid references; the scale and the key to identify specific coastal features.

The most disappointing aspect of case study performance continues to be the failure of some candidates to select a relevant example or to attempt these questions. The case study questions, along with the SPaG mark account for 24 out of the total mark of 66. This range of marks covers four grade boundaries. Over a third of candidates failed to attempt Question 2g) whilst others offered completely erroneous examples such as natural hazards or aid projects.

Both examiners noted the encouraging highlighting of key words within questions by some candidates. However some candidates did this with little thought or focus by underlining almost every word. This should be smarter and practiced as part of exam preparation. Candidates could be given a limit regarding how many words they could underline for a give set of questions. Success criteria could focus on command words, if two responses are needed, if a Resource is used, and for case studies, the place/scale needed and the content focus.

Candidates should also be aware of the two types of four marker question. Where candidates are asked for two ideas each must be explained to secure four marks. Examiners use a tick to annotate a relevant idea and 'DEV' to show that this has been explained or developed. Candidates who give more than two ideas without any credible development can only gain two marks. However if two ideas are not specified by the question, four basic valid ideas can secure full marks. Questions 2e) and 2f) exemplify this. Candidates could use other past papers (2014 and 2015) to identify and respond to the different four mark question types.

Centres should also consider the management of candidates during the examination. Examiners commented on separate extension booklets being used rather than the additional pages provided in the question-answer booklet. Some examiners struggled to decipher the handwriting of a few candidates. One Examiner noted: '*The growth of very poor handwriting becomes more noticeable year on year and it does make marking more challenging*'. Centres should consider if such candidates could be supported by use of a scribe or a laptop to word process their answers. Centres should also ensure that the accompanying paper work is fully completed for

the use of a scribe or word processor. This is important in enabling Examiners to award the correct mark for spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Comments on Individual Questions:

Question 1:

Question 1 assessed the Rivers and Coasts Theme of the Specification. The Resources were an OS map extract of the Tenby area of South Wales, a photograph of a headland in the same location and a block diagram showing the hydrological cycle for a hypothetical drainage basin landscape.

Over half the candidates successfully demonstrated their OS map reading skills for part (a). They used a four figure grid reference to find and name a headland for part (i), used the scale to estimate the area of a beach for part (ii) and in part (iii) they used the key to identify the beach materials. Sadly, between one fifth and one sixth of candidates did not attempt these questions.

For part (b) candidates were required to apply relevant knowledge of beach formation to the example shown on the OS map extract. One third of candidates did not respond at all, making this the joint third highest omission rate for the whole examination. Only one quarter of candidates gained marks. These were mainly for basic ideas about deposition or longshore drift.

Over half the candidates were able to identify Monkstone Point (Fig. 1) as a headland for part (c) (i). The most common incorrect choice was for spit. In part (ii) one third of candidates were able to gain marks for processes of erosion affecting the headland. Abrasion and hydraulic action were the most common responses with some candidates also able to explain how the process operated and how this would erode the headland to gain full marks.

Part (d) was the most successfully answered four mark question for the whole examination, with just over half the candidates able to recall their knowledge of coastal erosion reduction methods. Concrete sea walls and groynes were the most common examples, with just over a quarter of candidates being able to explain how these methods reduced the impact of erosion.

Fig. 2, the diagram of the hydrological cycle was used to support the transition from coasts to rivers for part (e). Just over half the candidates identified ocean as an example of a store for part (i) with nearly three quarters choosing surface run off as the transfer in part (ii).

Part (f) required the application of knowledge of the causes of flooding to the built up area located at the end of the river network on Fig. 2. Just under half the candidates gained marks. Most were for simple ideas such as heavy rainfall or the steep slope. Very few were able to develop their ideas by explaining how their given cause(s) operated to lead to river flooding at the built up area.

There were some impressive responses to the river valley landform case study in part (g). These showed thorough coverage of waterfalls. The best had almost textbook quality diagrams with clear labels and cogent explanations of the erosion processes involved. High Force on the river Tees was the most common example, with labelled rock types, such as Whinstone and/or the named waterfall enabling the best responses to achieve full marks. There were also some similar high quality answers showing the formation of ox-bow lakes. By contrast half the candidates did not gain any marks for this question. Their diagrams and examples were indecipherable. Those who gained Level 1 marks did so by producing a very basic sketch for a valid landform.

Question 2:

Question 2 assessed the Economic Development Theme of the Specification. The Resources were pie charts showing employment structure for three contrasting countries, a photograph of plantation workers in an LEDC and an information graphic about aid from the USA to the Philippines after a natural disaster (Typhoon Haiyan).

Nearly all candidates were able to read the pie charts for part (a) (i) and (ii), however less were successful with part (iii) with nearly a quarter of candidates choosing the incorrect answer of 48%.

Part (b) was very challenging, asking candidates to link differences in employment structure to difference in economic development. Just over one third of candidates secured one or two marks for giving relevant evidence such as a high primary sector for Tanzania. However few were able to link this to a valid, coherent explanation. Basic ideas about reliance on agriculture for subsistence or exports enabled some to gain a further mark.

For part (c) nearly half of all candidates correctly identified primary as the correct sector with a basic idea about farming or raw materials for the second mark. Incorrect ideas about manual labour or low wages limited some to only one mark for primary.

Part (d) marked a shift to secondary industry and required candidates to use their knowledge to describe and explain two relevant location factors. One third of candidates did not attempt this question, the joint third highest omission rate for the whole examination. Most candidates did not score any marks as they continued to use Fig. 10 to write about primary industry. Smart highlighting of secondary industry may have helped these candidates. The few candidates who did gain marks were credited for basic ideas about transport links or access to workers.

Part (e) marked a transition to aid. Successful answers made good use of the Resource. They were able to link the elements shown to specific needs after a natural disaster. The importance of clean water for health, food supply and hunger, the need for safe shelter for the homeless and hygiene kits to treat the injured and prevent infection were all clearly covered. Some candidates gained only one mark for a general statement about helping people to get back on their feet or similar. Candidates who ignored the command word 'explain' often failed to score as they merely copied a list items of aid from Fig. 12.

For part (f) candidates were required to recall their knowledge of problems for LEDCs caused by aid from MEDCs. Just over one third of candidates did not attempt this question to give the second highest omission rate for the whole examination. Nearly half did score marks, with some being able to explain two problems clearly. Dependency and debt were the most common, with some ideas about corruption and inappropriate aid also featuring. Some candidates continued to focus on Fig 12 and comment on the aid shown in the Resource instead of problems in general terms.

Part (g) marked another transition within the coverage of the diverse Economic Development theme. Candidates needed an example of an economic activity which has damaged the physical environment with some ideas about the management of this. This yielded the highest omission rate for the whole examination, with over a third of candidates declining the question. Over half of all candidates did not achieve any marks. These candidates chose natural hazards or aid projects for their economic activity example and could not achieve any marks.

Some tried to adapt an MNC-LEDC case study such as Nike in Vietnam but focused on the impact on the economy or people and struggled to link their example to the environment. More successful were those who considered the impact of Coca Cola in India with relevant ideas about water depletion and contamination. Others received one or two marks for the impact on tropical rainforests but believed that deforestation was a valid economic activity.

However, there were a few encouraging, contemporary examples given. Pollution in the Pearl River Delta was common along with palm oil production in Indonesia or Malaysia. These responses gave coherently linked ideas about damage to the air, soil and water quality, or the destruction of rainforest and wildlife habitats. Impacts on human health were also credited. The more challenging management section was tackled with less confidence and clarity. Most were hypothetical responses about fines for companies causing pollution or habitat protection schemes with very little clear, correct detail.

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