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GCSE (9-1)

Examiners' report

GEOGRAPHY A (GEOGRAPHICAL THEMES)

J383
For first teaching in 2016

# J383/01 Summer 2019 series
Version 1

Contents

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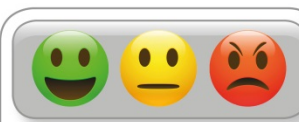
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Introduction

Our examiners' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on candidates' performance in the examinations. They provide useful guidance for future candidates. The reports will include a general commentary on candidates' performance, identify technical aspects examined in the questions and highlight good performance and where performance could be improved. The reports will also explain aspects which caused difficulty and why the difficulties arose, whether through a lack of knowledge, poor examination technique, or any other identifiable and explainable reason.

Where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report. A full copy of the question paper can be downloaded from OCR.

Paper 1 series overview

> **For candidates to be successful in Component One: Living in the UK today, they needed to:**
>
> - Know the content as displayed in the specification, including key geographical terms. The examination questions are derived from the specification, so the candidates need to know it well.
>
> - Practise how to write a clear and precise geographical explanation.
>
> - Learn how to respond to higher level command words such evaluate and examine.
>
> - Make sure they have revised geographical skills in preparation for this component.

Candidates who performed well in this assessment used the time appropriately and attempted all the questions. They were able to show their understanding by developing explanations. This was particularly the case in the 2 mark questions which required one reason, including Question 2 (b)(i) and Question 3 (c)(iii). Ordnance Survey (OS) map skills in Question 1 (a) were secure and high performing candidates were able to develop evaluative or analytical points in the level of response questions in Question 1 (c), 2 (c) and 3 (d). In these responses, there was evidence of a clear and logical structure and well-developed ideas.

Candidates who did less well did not use basic geographical skills such as measuring distance in Question 1 (a)(i) or show a reasonable knowledge and understanding of specification content including floodplains in Question 1 (b)(ii) and counter-urbanisation in Question 2 (b)(ii). The question on the mechanisation of farming in Question 3 (b) was a good example of where some candidates made generic comments such as 'destroy habitats,' 'damage environments' rather than clear geographical explanations.

Question 1 (a) (i)

1   (a)   Study **Fig. 1**, the **OS map** extract.

   (i)   What is the width of the valley marked on the map between X and Y?

   A   1.2 km
   B   1.7 km
   C   2.4 km
   D   4.8 km

   Write the correct letter in the box.   [1]

> The vast majority of candidates calculated the correct straight line distance, however many did not convert the length on the map to the actual distance on this 1:50,000 map extract. Interpreting an OS map at this scale and at 1:25,000 is a key geographical skill outlined in the specification.

	AfL	Centres would be advised to provide opportunities for their students to practise using such maps during the teaching of this component.

Question 1 (a) (ii)

   (ii)   In which general direction is the River Wye flowing?

   A   North
   B   South East
   C   South West
   D   West

   Write the correct letter in the box.   [1]

> Most candidates correctly interpreted the map and used this geographical skill effectively. Where candidates were incorrect, they usually thought the river was flowing in a south-westerly direction; many will have mixed up east and west.

Question 1 (a) (iii)

(iii) Using **OS map** evidence, describe the characteristics of Monk's Dale in 1374.

....

....

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....

.... **[3]**

Candidates scoring full marks usually outlined features such as the nature reserve, the non-coniferous woodland and the steep gradient/V-shaped valley in the grid square. However, the majority of candidates did not achieve full marks and this was due to a misinterpretation of the key or providing locational information about Monk's Dale rather than its characteristics.

Question 1 (b) (i)

(b) Study **Fig. 2** which shows a photograph of the River Severn.

(i) Name the landform marked Z.

A   Floodplain
B   Levee
C   Meander
D   V-shaped valley

Write the correct letter in the box.   **[1]**

Floodplains are mentioned in the specification as one of the river landforms centres need to teach alongside the others listed in this question. A substantial minority of candidates did not correctly recognise that the arrow in Fig. 2 was pointing at a floodplain.

	AfL	A useful starting point for this and the coastal topic is for candidates to identify landforms from photographs and maps where possible, particularly those with which the candidates are less familiar.

Question 1 (b) (ii)

(ii) Briefly explain how this landform develops over time.

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....

.... **[3]**

If candidates had chosen the incorrect landform in the previous sub-question they could still achieve full marks with an accurate explanation. Despite this, the majority of candidates scored one mark or less. Many recognised the role of flooding, but further valid points were required such as the role of deposition, the reduction in energy of floodwater or even the increased fertility provided by the different layers of alluvium.

If candidates chose the incorrect option for the previous question (1 (b)(i)), there was no double penalty; they could still achieve credit in this question. Where candidates explained how meanders develop over time, a number of candidates provided excellent clarity on whether erosion or deposition occurred on the outside or inside of the bend and if this created a river cliff or slip-off slope. This is important for future questions about landform development; there should be no ambiguity in the candidates' explanations.

Exemplar 1

A floodplain develops when a river repeatedly overflows it's banks and this area is flooded many times over. It is a flat area of land next to a river and is prone to flooding, and often wet, marshy land is found at floodplains. **[3]**

A typical response which clearly understands that floodplains result from flooding. The rest of the response describes the landform without any explanation of how or why it changes over time.

Question 1 (c)

(c)* CASE STUDY – a UK coastal landscape

Name of coastal landscape area in the UK:

....

Examine the impact of coastal management on your chosen coastal landscape.

....

....

....

....

....

.... [8]

Candidates achieving the highest level in this question often followed a simple formula. Having named an appropriate coastal landscape, the type of coastal management, such as groynes, was identified followed some form of evidence/place specific detail such as location and amounts. Common examples were drawn from Holderness, North Norfolk and the Jurassic Coast. These responses then explained the impacts of the management in terms of its strengths and weaknesses (the command word 'examine' requires some form of evaluation). The final key element then linked it all back to the question: impact on the 'chosen coastal landscape.' The highest scoring responses focused on this in terms of cliff recession, beach width, properties or ecosystems (the various features of a landscape), while those which considered cost, for example, were not focused on the question.

Many candidates scored zero in this question, either because it was not attempted, because they chose a river environment with no relevant information, or they merely focused on coastal landforms. Lower scoring, but relevant, responses just listed management strategies with little understanding of their function or any impacts at all. For example, many candidates explained that groynes were protection measures in themselves without an appreciation of the energy absorption capacities of the sediment they trapped.

Exemplar 2

the beach has lasted a lot longer than usual. Therefore, the tourists are still coming to enjoy the beach. Companies are staying to sell anything they want to sell. This is all bringing in money for Hunstanton's Council which means they can spend money developing other areas.

The final few lines of this response was a common issue whereby the evaluation was in terms of economic benefits rather than the 'impact on the landscape' as required by the question.

Exemplar 3

hard engineering such as sea walls are have been constructed in overstrand to deflect high energy waves. These are very expensive, and can damage the natural landscape.

The last two lines go a stage further than the previous exemplar by stating that sea walls 'can damage the natural landscape.' To gain more credit, this needed to be qualified by explaining how this happens, possibly by causing scouring of the beach. Alternatively, the candidate may show how 'changes to the natural landscape' could be because the sea wall is made of unnatural materials.

Question 2 (a) (i)

2   (a)   The bar graph below shows the top ten importers into the UK in 2016.
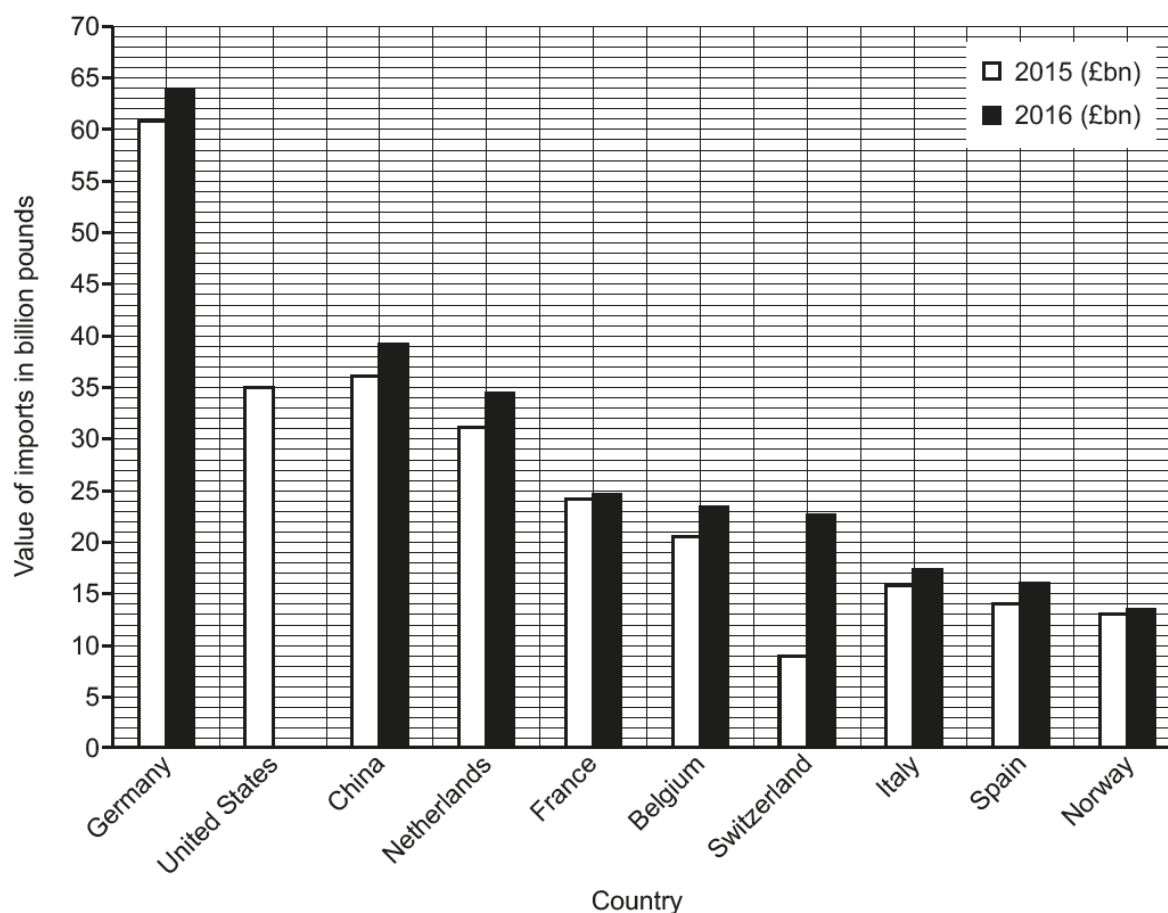
(i)   Define the term 'import'.

....

.... **[1]**

The vast majority of candidates scored one mark because they recognised that imports are goods or services that are brought into a country.

Question 2 (a) (ii)

(ii) Use data from the table to complete the bar graph.

Country	2016
United States	£40 billion

[1]

Around half of candidates completed the bar graph accurately. The other half, however, either did not attempt this question or completed the bar incorrectly. In the case of the former, it is possible that candidates did not recognise that exam papers in this specification do not always have lines where a response is expected. Some did not complete the bar accurately by not shading it in some way, placing it to the left of the 2015 bar, making it far too wide or it was simply the wrong length. Candidates should also have a ruler with them for every geography exam.

Question 2 (a) (iii)

(iii) Calculate the range in the value of imports in billion pounds in 2016.

.... [1]

The vast majority calculated the correct answer. It was unnecessary to expect the figure to be accompanied by 'billion pounds' given that this was already provided in the question. A significant minority of candidates either did not recognise the mathematical term 'range' or simply misinterpreted the bar graph. Candidates should have a calculator with them for every geography exam.

Question 2 (b) (i)

(b) (i) Study **Fig. 1**, the **OS map** extract.

Explain **one** reason why people may choose to move to Tideswell in grid square 1575.

....

....

....

.... **[2]**

The highest scoring responses used evidence from the map and offered a plausible explanation for why people may move to Tideswell. Although grid square 1575 was stated, this was just to help the candidates locate the village. It was possible for the reason to be drawn from the surrounding countryside, including the national park, primary and secondary roads and various sites of leisure and recreation, as well as reasons from within the village such as amenities like the public house and post office.

A minority of candidates achieved two marks, and this was down to a convincing explanation. This might have been the accessibility for commuters afforded by the primary routes or the quality of life and well-being provided by the rural location. Candidates who had pointed out the places of worship often struggled to explain why this was a pull factor, while many candidates ignored the map completely.

Exemplar 4

In Tideswell there is a place of worship and that may encourage people to move into the area

A perfectly valid reason is provided. The explanation is just a statement, so needs to refer to why this place of worship would be a reason to move to Tideswell.

Exemplar 5

There are lots of Secondary roads to get to places, lots of Commuity places to worship and the other part of the town Centre (end point)

A valid point is made about secondary roads. The candidate might have then developed an explanation about accessibility for commuters, for example. Only one reason is required so the second point is invalid.

Question 2 (b) (ii)

(ii) Explain the impacts of counter-urbanisation on villages such as Tideswell.

....

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....

....

....

.... **[4]**

This question differentiated between the candidates and a range of responses were given. The best responses either gave four clear impacts of counter-urbanisation or gave fewer but more developed impacts. Either strategy enabled candidates to achieve high marks whether or not their responses were in the context of Tideswell. The impacts could have been positive or negative and often included traffic congestion, increasing dormitory effects, rising house prices, increasing wealth and a higher demand for village services.

Unfortunately, a significant minority of candidates did not recognise the term 'counter-urbanisation.' These candidates wrote about the impacts of people leaving villages, believing that settlements such as Tideswell were towns or cities. Others managed to pick up some marks with valid impacts, but were often too vague with statements such as 'increased pollution' being made without any clarity about the causes.

Exemplar 6

Counter-urbanisation is & when people tend to move out of more urban areas and into more rural areas. This can cause dormitary villages, where places like Tideswell become very quite and empty in the day as the residents commute to larger cities for work, but return to the village at night. Increased traffic and congestion and pollution. **[4]**

After a developed explanation of dormitory villages, this response made a statement about traffic congestion and pollution. The response needed an extra impact or a development of the point: what is it about traffic congestion/pollution that is a problem?

Question 2 (c)

(c)* **CASE STUDY – a place or region in the UK which has experienced economic growth and/or decline**

Name your chosen place or region in the UK:

....

Evaluate the consequences of economic growth and/or decline for your chosen place or region in the UK. **[12]**

✎ Spelling, punctuation and grammar and the use of specialist terminology **[3]**

This response differentiated well between the candidates. The most commonly used example was Salford Quays, but Leeds, London (Docklands, Olympics) and Birmingham were also used. Some candidates drew on their local human geography fieldwork. Some responses focused on both growth and decline, while others just outlined one; both approaches could potentially yield comprehensive responses, but more depth and less repetition was more likely from the latter.

It is worth noting that page 5 of the specification states that 'case studies should be chosen from the 21st century.' Although it is recognised that teaching such case studies will require some historical context, long accounts of the 19th and early 20th century growth of dockland areas in response to questions such as this are unsuitable. On the other hand, it is recognised that late 20th century growth/decline often continued into the 21st century.

As with Question 1 (c), candidates who structured their responses clearly with evidence, explanation and evaluation often achieved high marks. Many had clearly learnt information from the textbook or other resources and this helped them with place specific detail and, to an extent, an understanding of the consequences of growth/decline. For many candidates, this took them to the top of Level 2 or even into Level 3. Better responses developed explanations of the consequences, and marks were given to those responses that attempted to evaluate the consequences.

Evaluation can be demonstrated in different ways and many candidates displayed high order thinking skills. In some cases, it may have been identifying different types of consequences – economic, social and environmental, positive and negative, local and regional – while in others, the use of connectives such as 'however', 'whereas' and 'but' produced powerful arguments and counter-arguments. Some sophisticated responses considered who the consequences benefitted, for example, local people being priced out of the housing market or not having the skills to undertake the new jobs.

When candidates struggled to achieve marks beyond Level 1 or 2, these responses often lacked place specific detail and explanations of the consequences of economic growth/decline were usually undeveloped, such as 'the docks closed and people lost their jobs.' There were some potentially promising responses, which contained both explanation and evidence, but the lack of evaluation limited the credit that could be given.

The vast majority of candidates achieved 2 or 3 marks for spelling, punctuation and grammar and the use of specialist terminology. In most cases, candidates could not achieve credit for inaccurate spelling or lack/inappropriate use of capital letters, particularly where meaning was affected. It is worth noting the reference to the use of specialist terminology, in this case terms such as 'rebranded', 'gentrification' or 'multiplier effect.' Candidates need to learn to select, use and accurately spell such words and phrases.

Exemplar 7

Consequence

Another Megafarm impam is that there is a lack of affordable housing, this is because the area has been developed and only luxary apartments have been built, this means that many local people cannot afford property in Salford Quays and therefore have to live elsewhere.

A Positive Consequence of redevelopment is that it has helped close the wealth divide between the north and south as massive companies such as the BBC have relocated there, bringing a lot of wealth with them.

This response was led by the evaluation rather than a description of the changes to Salford Quays. These two paragraphs are good examples of the types of consequences - positive/negative and local/regional scale – that can shape comprehensive evaluation.

Question 3 (a)

3   (a) Study **Fig. 3** which shows photographs showing changes in farming in the UK.

State **two** advantages of using a tractor instead of horses to plough fields.

....

....

....

.... **[2]**

The vast majority of candidates were able to state two advantages, usually focusing on speed and efficiency compared to horses, but sometimes also mentioning animal welfare concerns. That said, some candidates' responses could be vague and open to interpretation, such as 'tractors are cheaper to maintain.'

Question 3 (b)

(b) Farming to provide food has become more mechanised.

Explain the impacts of mechanisation of farming on ecosystems and environments.

....

....

....

....

....

.... **[4]**

As with Question 2 (b)(ii), there were different ways of achieving credit in this question. There were some excellent responses, particularly those that focused on eutrophication. Others clearly explained the impacts of farm machinery burning fossil fuels or the effects of habitat loss on biodiversity and food chains.

Marks were not given for vague and generic comments such as 'destroys habitats' and 'damages the environment'. In addition, a number of candidates repeated their responses from the previous question or explained social and economic impacts.

Exemplar 8

Mechanisation of farming has impacted ecosystems and environments because of the machinery used, giving of Carbon emissions and therefore contributing to global warming.
Also, Animal habitats and ecosystems could have been ruined by the building of factories.

Having developed a first point to receive two marks, the final section of this response was too vague to credit. Candidates need to be encouraged to practise writing precise and accurate geographical explanations.

Question 3 (c) (i)

(c) (i) Define the term 'non-renewable energy'.

....

....

....

.... **[2]**

Many candidates obtained both marks because they were able to go beyond the basic definition – finite resource - of non-renewable energy. Second points were often about unsustainability or the idea that these resources cannot be replenished once used.

Some candidates merely gave a different way of describing finite, while others gave examples - neither were credited.

	AfL	It is worth noting that any term stated in the specification does need to be known and defined by candidates; a glossary of these terms for each topic would be helpful for candidates to develop during their GCSE course.

Question 3 (c) (ii)

(ii) Describe changes in the pattern of energy supply in the UK from 1950 to the present day.

....

....

....

....

....

.... **[3]**

The vast majority of candidates achieved one or two marks for this question which assessed their knowledge rather than ability to interpret a graph. Again, as a statement in the specification, candidates need to know 'the changing patterns of energy supply in the UK from 1950 to the present day.' The word 'pattern' is important here. It refers to changes over time: increases, decreases, fluctuations etc and candidates should be able to give an indication of when these changes have occurred.

The highest scoring responses recognised that the dominance of coal had declined and has been gradually replaced by oil, natural gas and nuclear power during the second half of the 20th century, with renewable energy becoming increasingly prominent more recently. The third mark was reserved for any candidate who gave at least one indication of when these changes had occurred, with, for example, 'natural gas increased from the early 1990s' was sufficient.

Some candidates ignored the word 'change' in the question, while others focused on energy demand or gave reasons for the changes in energy supply. The difference between 'describe' and 'explain' is always going to be an ongoing challenge.

?	**Misconception**	Some candidates had the misconception that 1950 was pre-industrial and that little energy was supplied at that time.

Question 3 (c) (iii)

(iii) Explain **one** reason why the pattern of energy supply in the UK has changed since 1950.

....

....

....

.... **[2]**

As with Question 2 (b)(i), this question differentiated well between candidates who were able to develop an explanation and those who struggled to go beyond a basic, but creditworthy, point. Clear explanations focused on either the overall increase in energy supply or focused on a particular energy resource. For the latter, events such as miners' strikes were provided or societal and political changes such as the increasing awareness of, and responses to, climate change.

Exemplar 9

the ~~pattern~~ pattern of energy supply has changed
because of an increase in the population.

This response was typical in that a valid reason is given. Development was needed for the extra mark here, however, the candidate could show how increasing population has led to greater demand, which needs to be met by greater supply. Candidates focusing solely on the reasons for changing energy demand without any reference to supply were not credited.

Question 3 (d)

(d) Assess whether non-renewable energy should contribute to the UK's future energy supply.

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....

....

.... **[6]**

This question was very open-ended and gave candidates the opportunity to explain and analyse an important issue. Some candidates grasped this and provided some excellent reasons for continuing with the use of non-renewable energy, or not; either or both arguments were creditworthy.

Many candidates focused on factors such as reliability, efficiency, cost and the environment. These ideas were often well-developed, and a clear analysis was made in relation to the question. Sophisticated pieces of analysis argued that non-renewables would continue to be important until the technology for renewables is such that the baseload from the former is no longer necessary. Just a few candidates highlighted fracking and nuclear power as possible future sources.

Some candidates understood the impacts of using different energy sources but struggled to formulate responses that showed thorough analysis. Further, where responses mentioned cost, it was often too generic and needed to be linked to a source of energy; a hydroelectric dam is not cheap as many candidates suggested. In addition, many candidates said that non-renewable energy is easy to access, without having an understanding of the difficulties of finding, extracting and distributing North Sea oil for example.

Exemplar 10

Non renewable energy is harmful to the environment when burned for energy, it is a contributor to global warming and climate change. I believe that if more research and strategies for renewable energy was to be done, then there would be no need for non renewable energy and the world would the effects of global warming reduced, and animals such as polar bears saved from the brink of extinction. So no, non-renewable energy should not contribute to the UK's future energy supply. [6]

Some reasonable analysis of one particular argument is supported by a basic understanding – how global warming is caused by using non-renewable energy. The response is quite repetitive and would benefit from developing another point on either side of the argument, such as efficiency, cost or energy security.

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