

A LEVEL

Examiners' report

GEOGRAPHY

H481

For first teaching in 2016

H481/02 Autumn 2020 series

Introduction

Our examiners' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on candidates' performance in the examinations. They provide useful guidance for future candidates.



Reports for the Autumn 2020 series will provide a broad commentary about candidate performance, with the aim for them to be useful future teaching tools. As an exception for this series they will not contain any questions from the question paper nor examples of candidate answers.

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.

A full copy of the question paper and the mark scheme can be downloaded from OCR.

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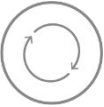

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Paper 2 series overview

The examination paper comprises two main sections. Section A: Changing Spaces, Making Places, is a compulsory section for a total of 33 marks. Section B: Global Connections, includes options, also in total 33 marks. Within Section B, candidates choose one of Trade in the contemporary world and Global migration, and one of Human rights and Power and borders. The paper includes a mixture of short-answer, low- and medium-tariff questions (2 – 8 marks) and essays (16 marks).

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|  | AfL | <p>In any one year the Section B pairs of option topics could be examined by either short-answer questions or essays. If the Trade and Migration pair of options are assessed by short-answer questions then the Human Rights and Power and Borders pair of options would be assessed by essays – and vice versa.</p> <p>It is important therefore that whichever options are chosen for study by a centre that candidates are prepared to answer questions on them in both formats - short-answers and essays.</p> <p>Examples of the two alternative styles of question paper, resource booklet and mark scheme are provided in the Sample Assessment Materials (SAMs) and in the Practice Paper. In the SAMs the Trade and Migration questions are short-answer with essays for Human Rights and Power and Borders. In the Practice Paper, Trade and Migration are assessed by essays with short-answer questions for Human Rights and Power and Borders.</p> <p>The short-answer questions contain some parts which are data-response. The essays require evaluation as well as knowledge and understanding.</p> |
|  | OCR support | <p>The SAMs are available in the A Level geography qualification page of the OCR website: https://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/as-and-a-level/geography-h081-h481-from-2016/assessment/</p> <p>The Practice Papers are available within Interchange: https://www.ocr.org.uk/administration/support-and-tools/interchange/</p> |

Although the entry for this November series was small, there was a wide range of responses. There was no significant difference in performance between Sections A and B, or between the options.

A higher number of candidates chose to answer questions on Global Migration rather than Trade in the contemporary world. There was a more even balance in choice of Human Rights or Power and Borders.

| <i>Candidates who did well on this paper generally did the following:</i> | <i>Candidates who did less well on this paper generally did the following:</i> |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistently good performance throughout • Appropriate time management - responses weighted according to the mark allocation • Place-specific detail incorporated within essays, plus clear attempts to be evaluative • Essays structured with introduction, paragraphs for each main point, and conclusion related to the requirements of the question | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lengthy responses for the earlier short-answer / low tariff questions; this penalised performance later on with unfinished scripts • Very limited or no place-specific detail included in essays and 8 mark case study questions • Case study material written per se with no reference / application to the question • Evaluative comments in essays only very basic and not substantiated |

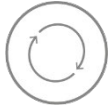
Section A: Changing Spaces, Making Places – overview

This compulsory section comprised four parts; three short-answer questions and one essay. Question 1a and Question 1b required evidence from different types of graph provided in the resource booklet. Figure 1 for Question 1a was a bar graph showing percentage change in population in rural areas of England by age group. Figure 2 for Question 1b was a line graph showing cyclical economic change over time in the UK in terms of unemployment and real GDP.

Questions 1c required understanding of the link between time-space compression and our sense of place. Question 1d* was an essay that required evaluation of rebranding strategies.


These four parts – in order, 3, 8, 6 and 16 marks - represent the typical and consistent format of Section A in this Human Interactions paper. These are referred to here because candidates should be aware of the appropriate time allocation in this first half of the examination. In matching the demands of these typical types of question to the mark allocation and Assessment Objective (AO) distribution the approximate time allocation in minutes is, 4, 11, 8 and 22, respectively. Obviously, there is flexibility given this is the very start of the examination, and there are resources to interpret, but meeting this approximation is clearly an issue for a number of candidates.

Comments on responses by question type

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|  | <p>AfL</p> | <p><u>Short-answer questions that include two different Assessment Objectives.</u></p> <p>The first two parts of Section A, Question 1a and Question 1b, are each assessed using two different assessment objectives:</p> <p>AO2 - application of knowledge and understanding to interpret and analyse the requirements of the question, and AO3 - selecting appropriate evidence from investigation and interpretation of the resource provided.</p> <p>For Question 1b this year, many candidates achieved marks in both AOs. A number simply described the graph of cyclical economic change often at length, giving many statistics, but then stopped short of answering the question by not linking the changes (booms and recessions) to social impacts.</p> |
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Key point call out

The key is to identify specific data within each resource in the context of the question for the AO3 marks, then to link that evidence to the requirements of the question for the AO2 marks.

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|  | <p>OCR support</p> | <p>There are now five sets of question papers, resource booklets and mark schemes including the three past papers (2018, 2019 and 2020) plus the SAMs and Practice Paper available. These provide a variety of resources and questions from different parts of the specification useful for practising this type of short-answer question.</p> <p>Please see links to websites above.</p> |
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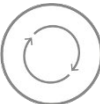
Section B: Global Connections – overview

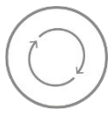
This section includes two pairs of option topics. Candidates choose either Option A - Trade in the contemporary world or Option B – Global migration. And either Option C – Human rights or Option D – Power and borders.

This year the Trade and Migration options were assessed by essay. Question 2* (Trade) and Question 3* (Migration) were essays requiring understanding of the challenges faced by LIDCs (and other types of country) in the global trade system and global migration system, respectively.

The Human rights and Power and borders options were assessed by short-answer questions. Question 4 (Human rights) and Question 5 (Power and borders) each contained four sub-parts. These included questions on the interquartile range, including a calculation based on data provided in a table, causes of conflict, strategies to address gender inequality and the impact of challenges to sovereignty.

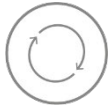
Comments on responses by question type

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|  | AFL | <p><u>Short-answer questions that require calculation / evaluation of a technique.</u></p> <p>In the short-answer questions in Section B (whichever pair of option topics is being assessed in this way) in order to achieve the four AO3 marks available there might be a requirement to evaluate the resource provided or to make a calculation.</p> <p>This year in the Human rights and Power and border options calculation of the interquartile range was required using tabulated data on female primary school attendance and UN peacekeeping personnel, respectively. This was followed by the requirement to give limitations of the interquartile range in describing the specific data set provided.</p> <p>Other statistics that could be assessed in this way can be found in the specification in point 4.4 Quantitative Skills, page 48.</p> <p>In past papers the resources presented as the basis of evaluative questions have included choropleth maps, pie charts, bar graphs and line graphs. In each instance, the required evaluation has been set in the context of that particular resource and the topic in question.</p> <p>The mark schemes for past papers are a useful guide to the type of comment required by candidates.</p> |
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|  | AfL | <p><u>The medium-tariff, case study questions.</u></p> <p>These questions are used in the short-answer sections of Section B. They could be set on any of the four options A-D, usually for 8 marks (all AO1).</p> <p>The case study requirement is clearly stated in the specification for each option. The specification detail sets out the specific terms of reference in each instance.</p> <p>For example, in Key Idea 2a in Power and Borders, the specification states:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case study of one country in which sovereignty has been challenged, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ causes and challenges to the government ○ impacts on people and places. <p>Question 5c this year for example was closely related to this part of the specification, linking challenges to sovereignty and their impacts on people.</p> <p>This type of question is 'levels' marked using three levels. The highest level requires <i>thorough</i> knowledge and understanding, <i>well-developed</i> explanations and <i>accurate</i> place-specific detail.</p> <p>To achieve the AO1 marks candidates need to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of places, process in human geography, interactions and change – depending on the nature and context of the question that has been set.</p> <p>In preparation for these medium-tariff case study questions it might be instructive for candidates to practise using examples from past papers. In particular they should identify the main elements of the question, which are inevitably linked. For example, in Question 5c these elements are 'challenges to sovereignty' and 'impacts on people'. Selection of the most appropriate country / case study then becomes important in order to support the link between challenges and impacts by reference to place-specific details.</p> <p>There were some very good responses this year using the situations in India (Question 4c - strategies to address gender inequality) and Ukraine (Question 5c - impacts on people of challenges to sovereignty). But a number of candidates simply wrote out their case study knowledge per se, with little regard to the specific requirements of the question. Or they made generalised comments that could have applied to any country.</p> |
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Key point call out

To achieve a mark in Level 3, the key points are that accurate knowledge of place-specific detail is required. And equally important this detail is applied in an appropriate way to support understanding of the question.

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|  | AfL | <p><u>Essay questions.</u></p> <p>Candidates are required to write two essays in the Human Interactions paper: one for the compulsory Changing spaces, making places topic and one for an option topic. This year the theme for the 'places' essay was rebranding and for the trade / migration option it was challenges for LIDCs.</p> <p>Each essay is assessed in terms of two assessment objectives – AO1 and AO2 – and both are levels marked. Briefly, the 8 marks for AO1 are for knowledge and understanding and the 8 marks for AO2 are for application of knowledge and understanding to analyse and evaluate.</p> <p>Assessment also considers Quality of Extended Response in three levels. There are no specific marks for this but it may be a factor in the final decision to award a particular mark.</p> <p>The mark schemes for all past papers clearly outline AO1 and AO2 points that could potentially be included in an essay. These are set out to assist examiners in the marking of this A level but they are also a very useful resource for teachers and students for tests and mock examinations.</p> <p>This year, as is often the case, a number of candidates chose to begin with the two essays, leaving the short-answer questions until the latter part of the paper. For some this was an effective strategy but for others who produced unnecessarily lengthy and repetitive essays it may have led to time mismanagement.</p> <p>At the upper end of the mark range there were a few detailed, well-written responses that demonstrated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • accurate and substantive case study knowledge and understanding (AO1) and • well-balanced arguments analysing and evaluating (AO2) the success of different types of rebranding strategies (Question 1d* place) and the challenges faced by LIDCs and other types of country (Question 2* trade / Question 3* migration). <p>But some candidates wrote such short essays that they were unable to include the required discursiveness and depth of supporting case material to substantiate their answer. A significant number did not include any place-specific detail at all.</p> <p>This year the most frequently cited case studies included Barcelona and east London for the rebranding essay, Sierra Leone for trade and Laos for migration.</p> <p>The best responses also conformed to the Level 3 descriptor for Quality of Extended Response with 'a well-developed line of reasoning which is clear and logically structured' and 'information presented that is relevant and substantiated'.</p> <p>It is clear to examiners that a short time at the start of an essay question is well spent in planning the answer / structure / logical order of the response.</p> <p>This is invaluable in the examination but also it can be an instructive exercise in the classroom. It is often helpful for candidates to plan an essay perhaps identifying the main points / issues in a spider diagram or a simple list and then to write just the introduction in no more than about 8-10 lines. This can often reveal whether or not a candidate has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • picked up the full meaning and implications of an essay question, and • is able to identify from the outset which case studies would be most appropriate. <p>Examples of essay questions can be found in the SAMs, Practice Paper, past papers, OCR textbook and Student Guides as stated above.</p> |
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Key point call out

The essay questions of course assess different parts of the specification year on year. They allow candidates to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of particular topics and issues and to use case studies to achieve the AO1 marks.

The questions are also designed to lead to a discursive response in which candidates have the opportunity to analyse and evaluate. This may lead to essays that consider alternative sides of an argument or different aspects of the issue in question to achieve the AO2 marks.

Guidance on using this paper as a mock

The November 2020 paper would be useful as a mock examination since in addition to the Practice Paper it provides a second paper which has an alternative structure to the SAMs.

For information, the option topics have been examined so far in the following formats:

| Assessment: | Essay questions | Short-answer questions |
|-----------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------|
| SAMs | HR and P&B | Trade and Migration |
| Practice Paper | Trade and Migration | HR and P&B |
| 2018 | HR and P&B | Trade and Migration |
| 2019 | HR and P&B | Trade and Migration |
| 2020 (Nov) | Trade and Migration | HR and P&B |

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