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OCR
Oxford Cambridge and RSA

GCSE (9-1)

Examiners' report

GEOGRAPHY A (GEOGRAPHICAL THEMES)

J383

For first teaching in 2016

J383/02 Summer 2024 series

Version 1

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Contents

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. A selection of candidate answers is also provided. 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 and the mark scheme can be downloaded from OCR.

Paper 2 series overview

The June 2024 examination was the fourth full examination session, without any optionality (2022), for J383 02, GCSE (9-1), Geography Specification A, The World Around Us.

All examiners and team leaders agreed that the 2024 examination was pitched at an 'appropriate level' for the candidates. They felt that most candidates made good use of their time to complete all necessary questions. Many also made good use of the additional pages to develop their responses to medium and high tariff questions. One examiner remarked: *"the majority completed the exam questions and frequently required additional space, which almost always added value to their answers."* The majority of responses were well written, with about three quarters of candidates scoring two or three for their spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPaG) mark on Question 2 (b).

Question 3 was the most successfully answered question, closely followed by Question 1. Two of the three levels of response questions required case study examples. A tropical rainforest for Question 1 (e) and a city in an LIDC or EDC for Question 2 (b). The best performance was on Question 1 (e), this was marginally surpassed by performance on the 6 mark Question 3 (e) about the consequences of climate change.

As always, the key factor for high performance is the successful application of knowledge and understanding to meet the requirements and demands of the questions. This is most important for the levels of response questions. The 12 mark question will always cover a range of requirements and assessment objectives. This ability to read the questions and focus on applying precise knowledge and understanding distinguishes the best candidates from the rest. With both case study questions some candidates included a wide range of place specific detail but were unable to provide developed or well developed ideas that matched the specific demands of the questions. Such responses are limited to Level 1 marks only, or in some cases, no marks at all. Answers to Question 3 (e) were more clearly focused, with some detailed comments on the consequences of climate change. Many of the better responses included named places, where relevant, these were acknowledged as developed ideas.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:
• were able to interpret a climate graph • showed a good understanding of the interdependence of plants and animals in a coral reef • showed sound knowledge and understanding of sustainable use and management in a tropical rainforest • were able to interpret development indicator data • showed sound knowledge and understanding of migration (international and national) and its impact on the growth and character of an LIDC or EDC city • had some understanding of the causes of drought • showed a clear understanding of how volcanic eruptions can cause climate change • showed good awareness and understanding of the consequences of climate change.	• gave long responses to low tariff questions • provided superficial place specific information to case study questions, without any relevant developed ideas • gave a named AC city instead of an example from an LIDC or EDC • gave a named LIDC or EDC country instead of a named city • did not attempt more challenging medium and high tariff questions.

Question 1 (a) (i)

Ecosystems of the Planet

1

(a) Look at **Fig. 1** in the Resource Booklet.

(i) Describe how the grasshopper is connected to other animals in the ecosystem.

.....

.....

.....

..... **[2]**

This question proved to be a positive start to the examination for most candidates who gained both marks by identifying the coyote and snake as animals that were connected to the grasshopper in Fig. 1. Full marks were also given to those who described the links between the grasshopper, the snake and the hawk. It was encouraging to note that all candidates attempted this question. Some candidates lost valuable time by providing overly detailed accounts, explaining the relationships covered by Fig. 1. These responses could not be given more than 2 marks, which were gained by many with simple descriptive responses.

Assessment for learning

The crude rule of one minute per mark on this examination is a useful guideline for how much time and thought should be devoted to each question. Candidates should practice writing short, clear and coherent responses to 2 mark, low tariff questions. The clues are the mark allocation and the limited lines for the answer. This saves time to focus on the medium and higher tariff questions.

Question 1 (a) (ii)

(ii) Identify **one** abiotic component shown in the ecosystem.

..... **[1]**

A similar proportion of candidates gained the mark for naming sunshine or soil as an abiotic component. Sunlight or the Sun's heat were also accepted as correct answers. Grass was a common response, with perhaps some candidates incorrectly thinking that abiotic means 'not animals'.

Question 1 (b) (i)

(b) Look at **Fig. 2** in the Resource Booklet.

(i) Which month has the **highest** rainfall?

..... **[1]**

All candidates attempted this question with the majority gaining the mark for August. The most common miscalculated response was April, this was probably as candidates used the temperature line on the climate graph (Fig. 2), with April having the highest temperature.

Question 1 (b) (ii)

(ii) Calculate the temperature **range**.

..... **[1]**

Most candidates correctly used the graph to calculate the temperature range of 8. Due to the clarity of the graph in Fig. 2 there was no margin for error, so a response of 9 was not given a mark. Some incorrect three digit answers were probably due to candidates using the rainfall data for their calculations.

Assessment for learning

A range of graphs is listed on page 13 of the Specification. Candidates should be exposed to these when covering the content of the Specification, to develop their interpretation skills and to understand why certain graphs are more appropriate for specific data than others. This also applies to Question 2 (a) (ii) where candidates were asked to choose the best type of graph to show the relationship between two variables.

Question 1 (c)

(c) State **two** features of the climate for a **polar ecosystem**.

1 .....

.....

2 .....

.....

[2]

Most candidates gained 1 mark for stating that polar ecosystems had very or extreme cold climates. Cold alone was not given a mark. Some candidates secured a second mark by stating that polar ecosystems had dry climates or very little rainfall. With some candidates mentioning that most precipitation would fall as snow. Where candidates focused on landscape features or plants and animals in a polar ecosystem they were not credited for these ideas.

Question 1 (d)

(d) Explain how plants and animals are **interdependent** in a coral reef.

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..... **[4]**

The simplest responses covered food chains within a coral reef or the coral providing shelter for fish. The best responses gave impressive accounts of the symbiotic relationships between zooxanthellae and coral polyps, with detail about the recycling of nitrogen within the ecosystem. Candidates who did not gain any marks wrote about the conditions needed for coral reefs to flourish or some of the threats faced by coral reefs.

Question 1 (e)*

(e)* CASE STUDY

Sustainable use and management in a tropical rainforest.

Tropical rainforest you have studied: .....

Evaluate the success of sustainable use and management in a tropical rainforest.

.....

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.....

..... **[8]**

Most responses focused on the Peruvian rainforest applying knowledge and understanding gleaned from the OCR approved Specification A textbook. The highest level went beyond this by giving detailed insights into management within the Purus-Manu Conservation Corridor. These included information about each zone and its success in promoting scientific research, ecotourism and protecting the rights of indigenous peoples. Simpler responses covered management strategies such as heli-logging, forestry permits and reforestation.. High level responses contrasted the localised nature of success in conserving biodiversity with the challenge of managing the vast area of rainforest. This was linked to the persistence of illegal logging fuelled by a lack of surveillance resources, bribery and corruption. Relevant place specific detail given to support responses included locational information, area, named zones or national parks, or relevant ideas about indigenous tribes and biodiversity. Unfortunately for some candidates their over reliance on place specific detail was not linked to sustainable use and management. Others focused their response on climate, biodiversity, the rainforest ecosystem or deforestation and threats to biodiversity. These were only creditworthy if given in the context of the success of sustainable use and management.

Assessment for learning

Place specific detail is an important element of case study responses. However, candidates should understand that developed and well developed ideas relevant to the specific demands of the question are more important. The quality and range of these ideas determine the level that the response has reached. Place specific detail is then considered to determine the mark to be given within the level band. Answers which are overloaded with place specific detail at the expense of relevant ideas will achieve little if any marks. These ideas also apply to case study Question 2 (b) on this examination.

OCR support

For exemplification of the application of developed and well developed ideas in deciding Levels given to case study questions, and the role of place specific detail in awarding specific marks, Centres and candidates are encouraged to use the following OCR publications:

Candidates Style Answers 2018, Candidate Exemplars 2019, Candidate Exemplars 2022.

These have a range of authentic examination answers with detailed commentary about how and why marks were given.

Question 2 (a) (i)

People of the Planet

2

(a) Look at **Table 1**.

Table 1. Development indicators for four African countries

Country	GNI per capita ($)	Life Expectancy (years)	Literacy Rate (%)
Angola	6600	62	75
Equatorial Guinea	17000	67	95
Mozambique	1200	57	61
Zambia	3300	65	86

(i) Calculate the **mean** GNI per capita.

..... **[1]**

Most candidates were able to calculate the correct mean of 7,025 for the available 1 mark. Some did spend valuable time on providing detailed evidence of their working out. This would only be worthwhile if clear instructions were given to do this, with a second mark available.

Question 2 (a) (ii)

(ii) Which type of graph would **best** show the relationship between GNI per capita and Life Expectancy?

A bar graph

B line graph

C population pyramid

D scatter graph

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

The correct answer is **D**, a scatter graph would be the best way to show the relationship between GNI per capita and Life Expectancy. The most common incorrect answer was line graph, followed by bar graph. Centres are reminded to look at the AfL point about graphs given for Question 1 (b).

Assessment for learning

Candidates could also use Questions 2 (a) (i), (ii) and (iii) from the 2019 examination. Candidates were asked to add a point to a scatter graph showing GNI per Capita and Internet Users, then add a line of best fit, then describe the relationship shown by the completed scatter graph.

Question 2 (a) (iii)

(iii) GNI per capita is an economic development indicator.

State **one** other development indicator **not** shown in **Table 1** above.

..... **[1]**

Successfully answered by most candidates. The most common answers were birth rate, death rate, infant mortality rate, GNP and GDP per capita and the HDI (Human Development Index).

Question 2 (a) (iv)

(iv) Explain why Equatorial Guinea is classified as an Emerging and Developing Country (EDC) instead of a Low-Income Developing Country (LIDC).

Use data from **Table 1** in your answer.

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..... **[3]**

One mark was reserved for the inclusion of accurate data from Table 1. Some candidates took note of the command word 'explain' to secure all 3 marks. They were able to explain how their selected data indicated how Equatorial Guinea was more developed than the LIDCs included in Table 1. Most common were links between the high literacy rate and education and life expectancy and health care and standard of living. Two marks were given to candidates who quoted relevant data and then commented on this being the highest compared to the other countries in Table 1, thereby indicated that Equatorial Guinea was more developed. One mark only was given to those who cited relevant data without any explanation.

Exemplar 1

Equatorial Guinea has highest life expectancy indicating good healthcare and medical treatments, 67 years. And has a literacy rate of 95% which is very high, showing that it has quality education for all its students. Its GNI is $17,000 which is higher than most LIDCs, thus making it an EDC. **[3]**

This response gained full marks. The first tick is for the ideas that the highest life expectancy indicates good health care and medical treatments, followed by a second tick for the correct data of 67 years. The third tick is for the idea that the literacy rate shows that Equatorial Guinea has quality education for all its students. Note that credit could not be given for the literacy rate or GNI per capita data as only 1 mark was given for use of relevant data.

Question 2 (b)*

(b)* CASE STUDY

The influence of migration on an LIDC or EDC city

LIDC or EDC city you have studied. .....

International migration is a greater influence than national migration on the growth and character of an LIDC or EDC city.

To what extent do you agree with this statement?

.....

.....

.....

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.....

..... **[12]**

The most common valid case study was Rosario based on the first edition of the OCR approved Specification A textbook, Istanbul from the second edition also featured. Lagos was also used, although with less success regarding the impact of international migration. Mumbai and Rio de Janeiro were other responses given. The best responses were clearly focused on the impact of international and national migration on the growth and character of their chosen city, with a well-considered evaluation of the relative importance of each. For Rosario this included the influence of Spanish and Italian migration on the city's language, culture and crime rate. For national migration the impact was focused on the growth of the city, especially the development of informal settlements. This pattern was also evident in the Istanbul case study examples, with international migration focused on the influx of refugees and economic migrants using Istanbul as a stepping stone to access Europe.

Evaluation statements regarding the relative importance of the type of migration were given in various ways. Some were given at the start of the answer, others in small statements at the end of each paragraph, and many in a summative conclusion at the end. These higher level responses were well supported with relevant place specific detail covering sources of migrants, population data, locational information, and named places within the city affected by migration, such as Dharavi in Mumbai or Makoko in Lagos.

As with Question 1 (e) many candidates overloaded their responses with random place specific detail which they tried to link to migration to their chosen city. Lionel Messi, Che Guevara and Pope Francis were frequently involved in this. Other lower scoring responses focused more on migration push and pull factors, rather than the impact of migration on the city's growth and character. Some also chose to give detail about conditions in informal settlements or tourism and tourist attractions.

There were candidates who did not give a valid named LIDC or EDC city. The most common errors were naming an LIDC country, usually Ethiopia or giving a named AC city, for example Leeds or Birmingham. For these responses the mid-Level 2, maximum 5 marks rule was applied. Answers focused on whole LIDC countries usually did not achieve any marks

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Question 3 (a) (i)

Environmental threats to our Planet

3
(a)
(i) Which statement is a **correct** definition of a drought?

A a period of time with higher than normal rainfall

B a period of time with higher than normal temperatures

C a period of time with lower than normal rainfall

D a period of time with lower than normal temperatures

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

Most candidates selected **C** as the correct answer. The most common error was B.

Question 3 (a) (ii)

(ii) Look at **Fig. 3** in the Resource Booklet.

Describe how **Fig. 3** shows evidence of a drought.

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..... **[2]**

Ideas lifted directly from Fig. 3 were only given credit if they were used to exemplify a general idea about how Fig. 3 showed evidence of drought. For example conserving water by filling a bath to halfway. Some candidates wrote detailed accounts covering all the ideas shown in Fig. 3. These lengthy expositions could still only be given 2 marks.

Question 3 (a) (iii)

(iii) Explain the **causes** of drought.

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..... **[3]**

Some candidates wrote about the effects of drought or about how human activities can exacerbate the impact of drought. Other candidates were able to state a cause of drought, but the command word 'explain' meant that linked descriptive ideas were needed to gain credit. The best responses outlined how El Niño /La Niña events affect the trade winds, leading to less warm water reaching coastal areas, leading to less evaporation and lower rainfall. A few candidates were able to link their ideas to global warming.

Exemplar 2

Droughts ~~are caused~~ can be caused by El Niño is places such as Australasia where the trade winds weaken and take the warm water from those shores back across the Pacific Ocean. This means that cold air sinks and no rainfall is produced. In other countries it is the same. If there is high **[3]**

This clear and correct response gained full marks. The first tick is for trade winds are weakened over Australasia by El Niño, the second tick is for this taking warm water away back across the Pacific Ocean. The final tick is for cold air sinks and no rainfall is produced. At each stage an explanation is credited. The annotation ^ would have been used if El Niño had been mentioned without any valid clarification. Note that the candidate continued this response on an extra page. This was not needed as full marks had already been secured.

Question 3 (b) (i)

(b) Look at **Fig. 4** in the Resource Booklet.

(i) Describe briefly the change in the area of permanent sea ice from 1980 to 2020.

.....

..... **[1]**

Simple responses such as it decreased, got less, reduced in size, were enough to secure the available 1 mark. Some candidates spent time giving a detailed account referencing the scale of change in kilometres squared or the geographical areas shown on Fig. 4. The small number of candidates who did not achieve a mark wrote about the ice melting without any reference to change in the area.

Question 3 (b) (ii)

(ii) Suggest how the enhanced greenhouse effect could have caused the change in the area of permanent sea ice.

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..... **[3]**

To gain the full 3 marks, candidates needed to explain how the ice melting was due to increases in temperatures and sea temperatures caused by the enhanced greenhouse effect. Most candidates achieved 2 marks for linking the greenhouse effect to rising temperatures and melting sea ice. A few mentioned how increased sea temperatures would inhibit the formation of sea ice. Some candidates spent unnecessary time explaining what the greenhouse effect is.

Question 3 (c)

(c) Which statement is **correct** about how ice cores show evidence of climate change?

A colour of the ice

B concentration of gases in air bubbles

C evidence of ice melting

D thickness of the ice

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

Most candidates selected **B** as the correct answer. There was an even spread of incorrect answers from the remainder of options

Question 3 (d)

(d) Explain how volcanic activity is a **natural** cause of climate change.

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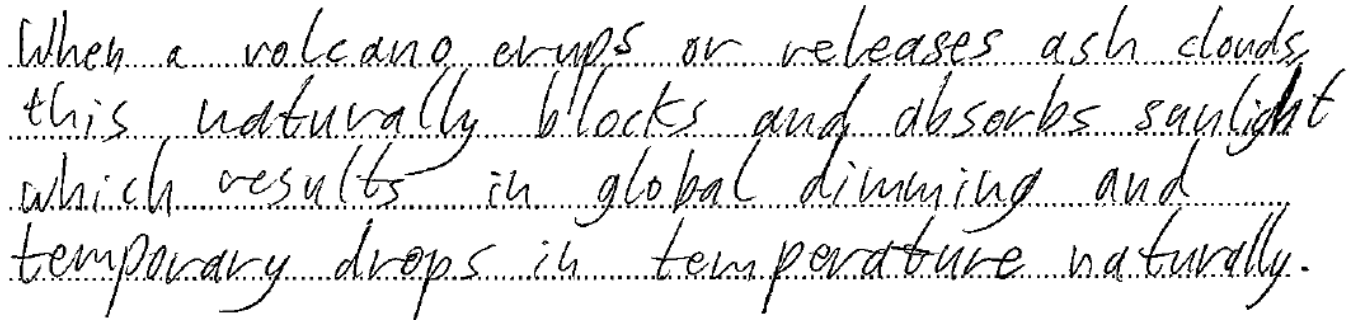
..... **[3]**

Some candidates offered clear and concise explanations of one key feature of volcanic eruptions. The most common was volcanic ash clouds, blocking incoming sun's rays to cause cooling, global dimming or volcanic winters. The emission of greenhouse gases, such as CO_2, contributing to the greenhouse effect and increasing temperatures was also a common response. Sulphur dioxide leading to sulphuric acid aerosols reflecting sunlight was another given. Some candidates gave unclear responses linking ash clouds to increased temperatures while others gave accounts of the impact of eruptions on the ozone layer and some thought that heat from lava would increase temperatures.

Exemplar 3



This concise response gained full marks within one sentence. The first tick is for 'releases ash clouds', the second for 'naturally blocks sunlight' and the third tick for 'which results in global dimming'. This is a good example of how to secure all 3 marks effectively with a clear focused response.

Question 3 (e)

(e) Discuss the consequences of climate change currently being experienced across the planet.

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.....

..... **[6]**

The most common response focused on melting ice caps linked to habitat loss in Polar Regions and/or increased coastal flooding or threats to low lying islands. Places mentioned included Tuvalu and the Maldives, although place specific detail was not required for this question, such information was credited as development of an idea. Similarly, some candidates mentioned Australia's Big Dry when explaining how drought was a consequence of climate change. Rising sea temperatures linked to coral bleaching, the increased formation and severity of tropical storms were also prominent responses. The best responses also included the social and economic consequences linked to these events. Credit was given to answers which covered responses to the challenge of climate change, such as the development of electric cars and renewable energy sources.

It was extremely encouraging to see so many confidently constructed responses showing good awareness of the challenges of climate change.

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