

Examiners' report

A LEVEL

GEOGRAPHY

OCR Level 3 Advanced GCE in Geography

H481

For first teaching in 2016

H481/02 Summer 2025 series

Contents

Introduction	3
Paper 2 series overview	4
Section A overview	5
Question 1 (a)	5
Question 1 (b)	6
Question 1 (c)	6
Question 1 (d)*	8
Section B overview	13
Option A overview	13
Question 2*	13
Option B overview	14
Question 3*	14
Option C overview	15
Question 4 (a) (i)	15
Question 4 (a) (ii)	16
Question 4 (b)	16
Option D overview	17
Question 5 (a) (i)	17
Question 5 (a) (ii)	18
Question 5 (b)	19

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 responses 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 [Teach Cambridge](#).

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Paper 2 series overview

After several years of assessment on the H481/02 Human Interactions, candidates are familiar with the format and rubric of the question paper. In Section B, Global connections candidates continue to predominately opt for Option B – Global Migration and Option C – Human Rights. There was no apparent difference in performance between the two main sections: A, Changing Spaces; Making Places and B, Global Connections.

It was evident that most candidates had prepared well for this examination and their responses demonstrated lots of examples of good practice. Most candidates answer the paper in question order, some responded to questions in an 'out of order' approach, which is an acceptable strategy, but it is worth drawing attention to not all of these candidates provided a response to the required questions.

Candidates are increasingly well prepared for Assessment Objective 3. Evidence extracted from resources is done so in a thorough fashion and candidates are demonstrating aptitude at responding to the evaluation of data presented in Section B.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:
• demonstrated well-structured essays with paragraphs and conclusions • showed evaluative thinking in the context of the question • incorporated place accurate specific detail which was used to substantiate judgements • evidenced thorough use of the resource booklet • remained concise, yet sufficiently developed • was able to identify suitable evidence from the resource booklet and could elaborate on that evidence in the context of the question • used geographical terminology skilfully and consistently • managed time well to make sure sufficient time was dedicated to every question • spent time planning essays to provide a well-developed line of reasoning in their responses.	• lacked structure and struggled to establish a well-developed line of reasoning • lacked supporting evaluation and drew simple conclusions • demonstrated revised place specific detail with little application to the question or did not produce accurate place specific detail • provided no or only basic evaluative points in questions awarding AO2 marks • did not investigate/interpret the resources in sufficient depth • provided overly lengthy responses that did not reflect the amount of marks available for the question • did not manage time in a satisfactory way leading to incomplete responses • did not produce responses of adequate length in order to satisfy level criteria at a high level • did not provide a response to all required questions.

Section A overview

Parts of the topic assessed this year in the Changing Spaces, Making Places section of the specification included: The complexities that exist when trying to define place, including the concept of space versus place; How a range of strategies can be used to rebrand places, such as sport, art, heritage, retail, architecture and food; The concept of social inequality and how this can be measured through indices such as housing, healthcare, education, employment and access to services; and a case study of one country or region that has been impacted by structural economic change, including the role of players involved in driving the change. This year's resources to be analysed included a photograph of part of the city of Tinghir and surrounding area in Morocco and three images of rebranding in Margate, a seaside resort in Kent.

Question 1 (a)

1

(a) Study **Fig. 1** which shows part of the city of Tinghir and surrounding area, Morocco.

Use **one** piece of evidence from **Fig. 1** to explain the concept of space versus place.

[3]

One AO3 mark is available for identifying a piece of evidence from the figure and two further AO2 marks available for explanation. This year's mark scheme allowed for responses including the urban built environment, cultivated fields/agricultural land, mountainous area/steep slopes, farmland/vegetation/water supply, places of worship/other services/construction industries. The most frequently used theme was that of the urban area with explanations linking the settlement to the concept of place. This was due to the meaning attached to this place by the people who live there and comparing it to people who view the photograph as a space due to the urban areas lack of meaning to them. It was pleasing to see that only a very small number of candidates were unclear on the concept of space and place.

Question 1 (b)

(b) Study **Figs. 2A, 2B** and **2C** which show images of rebranding Margate, a seaside resort in Kent.

Using evidence from **Figs. 2A, 2B** and **2C**, explain how different types of strategy can be used to rebrand places. **[8]**

A well answered question this year with most candidates secure in their knowledge of strategies used in the process of rebranding. These strategies included Market-led, top-down, flagship developments, art, heritage and brand artefact. Figure 2 included three images with Fig. 2A evidencing the Tate Contemporary Art Gallery and old Harbour Company building, Fig. 2B showing The Parade, regenerated historic old town and Fig. 2C being a photograph of Dreamland, redeveloped amusement park. Most responses explained rebranding strategies using all three images. Most candidates used the Tate modern and the Old Harbour Company building as the evidence from Fig. 2A, the market place used for food and drink in the old town from Fig. 2B and the modern/traditional rides and amusements of Dreamland from Fig. 2C.

Successful responses gained AO3 marks by demonstrating thorough investigation of the images to fully evidence different types of rebranding strategy. As well as AO2 marks, achieved with thorough application of knowledge and understanding, alongside clear, developed and accurate analysis of different types of rebranding strategies. Inspection of all three images was required, as guided by the question. Low scoring responses could have provided more thorough investigation of the images and greater analysis of different types of rebranding strategy.

Question 1 (c)

(c) Explain how social inequality can be measured through **two** indices. **[6]**

Almost all candidates were able to explain how social inequality can be measured through two indices. The mark scheme included indices linked to housing, healthcare, education, employment and access to services. Some candidates tried to introduce indices suitable for local and global inspection. Responses often included place specific detail which was not necessary but was credit worthy where it helped develop explanations, for example; how social inequality can be measured. The most successful candidates demonstrated thorough knowledge and understanding of two indices of social inequality which included well-developed ideas about measures of social inequality.

Responses awarded Level 1 tended to show basic knowledge and understanding of two indices of social inequality with simple ideas about measures of social inequality.

Exemplar 1

1	c	Social inequality can be measured through income, as this impacts the choice of housing and services ^{spending} that can be accessed. Spending power people have. For example, high incomes will allow people to own the large houses, and allow for more leisure activities and increased spending, leading to a higher quality standard of living and quality of life. Lower incomes may rent their housing, and only have access to cheaper flats or small houses that are not at the good quality, that can lead to health issues, overcrowding, and a lower standard of living, causing inequality. Social inequality can also be measured through access to services, as wealthier areas with may have
		access to better and more healthcare, with a lower doctor-to-patient ratio, as well as private healthcare that is affordable to the wealthy, people in the area. Other services such as transport and education may be better to facilitate the wealth and development of the area. Whereas the poorer areas may have more overcrowding so there is more pressure on healthcare and NHS services for example. Large immigrant diaspora groups may also strain education services as many of the children may not speak English as their first language. This shows how the access to services can show be a measure of social inequality.

This candidate was awarded in Level 3 by providing thorough knowledge and understanding of two indices of social inequality. This is an example of a strong response, demonstrating clarity on the two measures and detailed explanation of how they can measure social inequality.

Question 1 (d)*

(d)* For **one** country or region impacted by structural economic change, assess the role of players involved in driving the change. **[16]**

The mandatory essay-based Question 1 (d) was mainly focused on Birmingham for most answers this year. Other interesting areas included Barcelona, East London and South Wales. Candidates demonstrated significant knowledge of players and the role they have played in structural economic change. A common feature of successful responses are well-structured essays of relevant and substantiated content with developed lines of reasoning, required by the quality of extended response criteria in the mark scheme. Successful answers were often topped and tailed by short introductions and conclusions.

A feature of less successful responses was the presentation of revised case study material with little application to the demands of this evaluative question. Some of these responses demonstrated a lack of clarity on the concept of structural economic change and instead discussed the players role in economic and/or urban change. These candidates often found it difficult to evaluate the role of the player in driving structural economic change, instead focusing on AO1 about the work of the player.

Answers were frequently based on players including, transnational governments, national governments, local government and councils, businesses such as TNCs, private players such as industrialists, planners and architects, local communities and non-governmental organisations as suggested by the AO1 indicative content in the mark scheme. As mentioned in previous examiner reports, it is more common for candidates to evidence the first bullet point of the AO2 indicative content in the mark scheme, therefore, evaluating the role of each player/organisation/stakeholder that influences the change: some players have more influence than others.

Successful responses use arguments similar to bullet point 2 (in the mark scheme) and the other suggested indicative content for AO2 such as, recognising that in driving structural economic change players interact and their roles may be complementary. Alternatively, by demonstrating knowledge and understanding of how a range of players may play roles across different scales from international to local communities, and from large corporations to the private individual.

Assessment for learning



Essay planning remains a common practice among successful responses helping candidates to develop a clear line of reasoning as shown in the quality of extended response criteria.

Exemplar 2

1	d	Structural economic change is the shift in industries, employment and the structure of the economy. In Birmingham, a city located in the midlands of the UK, the main players driving economic change are the national government, local communities and private
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		players. The most important player in the role of driving economic change is the government due to their long-term visions that seek socio-economic, economic, environment and political outcomes for Birmingham.
		The government in Birmingham have consistently been at the foundational core of structural economic change. For instance, during the industrial revolution in the 1750s, the government were ultimately responsible for regulating the creation of factories such as Matthew Boulton's first steel manufacturing plant in 1761. Similarly, the government played a vital role in maintaining regulations and rights for workers after the trade union strikes across Birmingham which demanded both an increase in pay and better working conditions. Although, the most notable impact of the government's role in driving economic change is in 1991 where the city was facing 13% unemployment as Birmingham could no longer compete with global steel manufacturing giants such as Japan and China.

Therefore, the government funded £250 million into the National Convention Centre and expansion of Aston and Birmingham university to promote the tertiary and quaternary sector to promote the long-term ambition to move employment and Birmingham's economy to both service and

researched based.

Similarly, private players also act as important drivers for structural economic change. For instance, Matthew Boulton (a figure-head of the industrial revolution in Britain) had established over 20 factories across Birmingham. Similarly, private players had also played a vital role for shifting Birmingham's economic change in deindustrialisation. Their profit motives established an influx of retail, TNCs and foreign direct investment into the city as the shift to the tertiary and quaternary sectors became present. Furthermore, the growing population of Birmingham has encouraged private players to collaborate with the government to fund 65 new regeneration projects across the city with long-term plans to finish by 2050.

Another player which is arguably significant in impacting economic change are local communities. This involves the encouragement of grass-root activities and changing innovation for ideas and research in the quaternary sector. For instance, local communities in Birmingham have advocated for investments from the government to fund the Canal and River Trust to focus on improving the environment post-industrial revolution. Moreover, communities are

encouraging research into the environment of Birmingham such as the 'Birmingham Heartlands Organisation'. However, the impact of local communities in structural economy change are largely limited by the need for investments / money for projects.

In conclusion, it is evident that economic change in the industrial period was significantly impacted by private players. However, in the long-term aftermath of deindustrialisation, it is clear that the government is the main driver for creating employment opportunities and shift in economic structure due to necessary funds to promote it. In comparison, local communities have a smaller-scale role in driving economic change due to not having the funds to impact a city in the UK like Birmingham although there has been some impact through the establishment of research-led groups.

This exemplar demonstrates work that was assessed in Level 3 for both assessment objectives. AO1 is thorough in the role of players and there is accurate place specific detail. The answer is clear on the role of the players in driving structural economic change frequently commenting on sectoral change (Primary/Secondary/Tertiary/Quaternary) or industrialisation/de-industrialisation.

Analysis is clear, developed and accurate and evaluation of the role of players in driving structural economic change is detailed. The candidate uses the example of Birmingham and discusses the role of players including the government, private players and local communities.

The response is a good example of Level 3 on the 'Quality of extended response' in having a well-developed line of reasoning which is clear and logically structured and has presented relevant and substantiated information.

Section B overview

The two Global Systems options (Trade in the Contemporary World and Global Migration) were assessed using high tariff essay questions, and the two Global Governance options (Human Rights and Power and Borders) were assessed using low and medium tariff questions.

Option A overview

The essay question on Trade was derived from Key Idea 2a in the specification – Access to markets is influenced by a multitude of interrelated factors. Specifically, the question assessed the significance of the influence of technological and other factors in accessing global markets.

Question 2*

Option A – Trade in the contemporary world

2* 'Access to global markets is influenced mainly by technological factors.'
Discuss.

[16]

Strong knowledge and understanding of the influence of technology and other factors in accessing global markets was evidenced in several answers. Accurate place specific detail was provided for countries including Japan, India, the USA and Sierra Leone.

The more effective responses structured their answers in paragraphs based on a particular factor, often using technology as the starting point of the answer and inspecting its role usually in a range of countries at varying levels of development. These answers then moved on to alternative factors, again introducing accurate place specific detail. Factors often cited included technological factors such as connectivity; shipping technology; domestic transport technology; and communications. Economic factors often included investment ability in exploitation and transport and TNC influence. Political factors often included trade blocs and political stability, and environmental factors often discussed access to coastline for transport and industry and availability of natural resources. Successful responses provided clear, developed and accurate analysis of the influence of factors affecting access to global trade. Lots of students decided to secure AO2 marks by making points similar to the first point in the AO2 indicative content of the mark scheme by demonstrating understanding of the relevant importance/impacts of specific technologies.

Less successful responses often did not provide thorough knowledge and understanding of technological and other factors that influence access to global markets and found it difficult to provide accurate place specific detail. AO2 points were often simple and demonstrated limited accuracy and substantiation.

Assessment for learning



A useful teacher tool is to direct students toward the 'Quality of extended response' criteria in the final parts of the Question 2 marks scheme which encourages students to produce well-developed lines of reasoning with clear and logical structures of relevant and substantiated content.

Option B overview

The essay question on Global Migration was derived from Key Idea 2a in the specification – Global migration patterns are influenced by a multitude of interrelated factors. Specifically, the question assessed the significance of economic and other factors in influencing global migration.

Question 3*

Option B – Global Migration

3* 'Global migration patterns are influenced mainly by economic factors.'
Discuss.

[16]

Strong knowledge and understanding of the significance of economic and other factors in influencing global migration was evidenced in several answers. Accurate place specific detail was provided for countries including Laos, Brazil and USA.

More effective responses looked structured their answers in paragraphed sections based on a particular factor, often using economic factors as the starting point of the answer and inspecting its role usually in a range of countries at varying levels of development. These answers then moved on to other sections based on alternative factors, again introducing accurate place specific detail. Factors often cited included economic globalisation, employment opportunities; wage differentials; remittances; Political factors (such as political stability of host and source countries, membership of free movement zones, immigration and emigration policies), Social factors (such as family reunification and familiarity of culture) and environmental factors like natural hazards, disasters and sea level rise. Successful responses provided clear, developed and accurate analysis of the factors influencing global migration. Lots of students secured AO2 marks by making points similar to the first two points in the AO2 indicative content of the mark scheme, by demonstrating understanding of the relevant importance/influence of specific factors.

Less successful responses often did not provide thorough knowledge and understanding of economic and other factors that influence global migration and found it difficult to provide accurate place specific detail. AO2 points were often simple and demonstrated limited accuracy and substantiation.

Assessment for learning



A useful teacher tool is to direct students toward the 'Quality of extended response' criteria in the final parts of the Question 2 marks scheme which encourages students to produce well-developed lines of reasoning with clear and logical structures of relevant and substantiated content.

Option C overview

The questions on Human Rights were derived straight from the specification namely: Key Idea 3.a. Human rights violations can be a cause and consequence of conflict with special focus on the role of flows of people, money, ideas and technology in geopolitical intervention; and 2.a. the geography of gender inequality is complex and contested with special focus on a case study of women's rights in a country to illustrate the gender inequality issues that are apparent in that country. The resource provided for evaluation and analysis in Question 4 (a) (i) was a geolocated bar in Fig. 3, showing the number of personnel in UN Peacekeeping Missions in Africa 2021.

Question 4 (a) (i)

Option C – Human Rights

- 4**
- (a) Study **Fig. 3**, which shows the number of personnel in UN Peacekeeping Missions in Africa, 2021.
- (i) Evaluate the effectiveness of the presentation technique used in **Fig. 3** for showing number of personnel in UN Peacekeeping Missions in Africa. **[4]**

There were four AO3 marks available for this question for evaluating the effectiveness of the presentation technique used in Fig. 3. Candidates were given two marks for either identifying two advantages/and or disadvantages. A further two development marks were available for appropriate development. A significant number of candidates were able to identify advantages and/or disadvantages of Fig. 3 which was a geolocated bar, showing the number of personnel in UN Peacekeeping Missions in Africa 2021. It is pleasing to see that each year we are seeing more responses gain 2 development marks.

Some candidates could provide more concise answers. Focusing on 2 advantages and or disadvantages with development. Some candidates provided many advantages and or disadvantages, sometimes without development, that contributed to lower mark scoring.

The more frequently stated advantages included: Clear visual impression of the spatial patterns shown by the differing lengths of the bars; specific values for/difference between each UN mission identified based on numerical values shown in the key. The location of each country/area of mission was clearly identified via the outline map and annotations. Disadvantages included: data given for whole country/mission with the map not showing specific localities where personnel were deployed; map only shows the total number of personnel, it does not identify their specific role.

Question 4 (a) (ii)

(ii) Analyse the role of flows of people in geopolitical intervention.

[5]

There were five AO2 marks available for this question, assessed by two levels. Overall, the question was answered well, although some candidates would have achieved higher marks with a more thorough analysis of the role of flows of people in geopolitical intervention. The indicative content section of the mark scheme suggests that candidates could analyse the role of: Military personnel in providing protection/peacekeeping and by supporting NGO workers/police/UN officials; NGO worker/volunteers by assisting in mediation, distributing relief aid and providing training; Police by enforcing the rule of law and protecting human rights; and UN officials in ensuring coordination/cooperation in strategies.

Assessment for learning



Many of the candidates developed two or more points thoroughly enough to access Level 2. This was done by having clear paragraphs or sections dedicated to a particular flow of people, which demonstrated thorough knowledge and understanding, by looking for connections, causes and effects.

Question 4 (b)

(b) Referring to a **case study** of women's rights in **one** country, explain gender inequality issues that are apparent in that country.

[8]

The assessment team was pleased to see such a large number of successful responses for this question, demonstrating the detailed preparation by teachers and industrious revision of candidates. Level 3 could be gained by demonstrating thorough knowledge and understanding of gender equality issues that are apparent in a country, with well-developed explanations and accurate place specific detail.

Responses referred to places such as Afghanistan, but mostly India, with candidates explaining a wide range of gender equality issues such as access to healthcare and education, political participation, forced marriage, trafficking, employment opportunities, wage inequality, domestic violence/patriarchal societies and property ownership.

Occasionally candidate's responses were held back by explaining more points but in less detail, instead of providing thorough explanations on fewer points.

Candidates need to be aware that a lack of accurate place specific detail will hinder their ability to be successful in questions like this.

Assessment for learning



It is of vital importance that candidates revise accurate place specific detail and demonstrate it in their answers.

Option D overview

The questions on Power and Borders were derived straight from the specification namely: Key Idea 3.a. Global governance provides a framework to regulate the challenge of conflict with special focus on the role of flows of people, money, ideas and technology in geopolitical intervention; and 2.a. A multitude of factors pose challenges to sovereignty and territorial integrity with special focus on a case study of one country in which sovereignty has been challenged, including the causes and challenges to the government. The resource provided for evaluation and analysis in Question 5 (a) (i) was a geolocated bar in Fig. 4, showing the annual budget of UN Peacekeeping Missions in Africa 2021/22.

Question 5 (a) (i)

Option D – Power and borders

5

- (a) Study **Fig. 4**, which shows the annual budget (US\$ billion) of UN Peacekeeping Missions in Africa, 2021/22.
- (i) Evaluate the effectiveness of the presentation technique used in **Fig. 4** for showing the annual budget of UN Peacekeeping Missions in Africa. [4]

There were four AO3 marks available for this question for evaluating the effectiveness of the presentation technique used in Fig. 4. Candidates were given two marks for either identifying two advantages/and or disadvantages. A further two development marks were available for appropriate development. A significant number of candidates were able to identify advantages and/or disadvantages of Fig. 4 which was a geolocated bar, showing the annual budget of UN Peacekeeping Missions in Africa 2021/22. It is pleasing to see so many responses gain two development marks for explaining the advantages and/or disadvantages.

Some candidates could provide more concise answers, instead choosing to list advantages and disadvantages without development.

The more frequently stated advantages included: Clear visual impression of the spatial patterns shown by the differing lengths of the bars; specific values for/difference between each UN mission is identified based on numerical values shown in the key. The location of each country/area of mission was clearly identified via the outline map and annotations. Disadvantages included: data given for whole country/mission with the map not identifying specific localities receiving the expenditure. The map only shows the total budget figure for each mission, it does not identify the specific uses of the funds.

Exemplar 3

5	ai	This presentation technique is effective in showing spatial patterns and distributions of the budget spendy, as the bars are placed on the corresponding country, so spatial patterns can be identified. \$ However, it is hard to compare the key to the length of each bar, making accurate readings from from the graph harder to take and numerical comparisons harder as well. Overall it is effective as it shows the information for each country in a clear, spatial and visual way.
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This response was given 4 marks for identifying that bars are placed over respective countries, with a development mark for explaining that this shows spatial patterns and distributions. The other pair of marks are awarded for identifying that it is hard to compare the key to the length of bars, and a development mark for explaining that this makes it harder to make accurate readings from the graphs.

Question 5 (a) (ii)

(ii) Analyse the role of flows of money in geopolitical intervention.

[5]

There were five AO2 marks available for this question, assessed by two levels. Overall, the question was answered well, although some candidates would have achieved higher marks with a more thorough analysis of the role of flows of money in geopolitical intervention. The indicative content section of the mark scheme suggests that candidates could analyse the role of: operating costs such as equipment and transport/infrastructure, administration; providing health facilities and/or shelter; daily support for all personnel in the area with food and water; operating technology such as communication facilities; costs of training civilians; and debt relief.

Assessment for learning



Many of the candidates developed two or more points thoroughly enough to access Level 2. This was done by having clear paragraphs or sections dedicated to a particular flow of money, which was demonstrated thorough knowledge and understanding by looking for connections, causes and effects.

Question 5 (b)

- (b) Referring to a **case study** of **one** country in which sovereignty has been challenged, explain causes of the challenge.

[8]

The assessment team was pleased to see such a large number of successful responses for this question, demonstrating the detailed preparation by teachers and industrious revision of candidates. Level 3 could be gained by demonstrating thorough knowledge and understanding of the causes of challenges to sovereignty in a country, with well-developed explanations and accurate place specific detail.

Responses referred to places such as Mali, but mostly Ukraine, with candidates explaining a range of causes of the conflict as evidenced in the indicative content of the marks scheme including: **current political boundaries** (for example - contested territory/invasion, legacy of colonialism/ethnic partitioning); **transnational corporations** (economic power of some large TNCs may cause loss of control of territory, workforce, environment and even a country's political decision-making); **supranational institutions** (member countries are bound by the requirements/have to comply with laws of regional trading blocs, controversial intervention in a country by the international community); **political dominance of ethnic groups**; **transnational movement of terrorist/extremist activity**; and **contested maritime boundaries**.

Occasionally candidate's responses were held back by explaining details about the challenge to sovereignty without thorough explanation of the causes.

Candidates need to be aware that a lack of accurate place specific detail will hinder their ability to be successful in questions like this.

Assessment for learning



It is of vital importance that candidates revise accurate place specific detail and demonstrate it in their answers.

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