

Examiners' report

GCSE

GEOGRAPHY B

(GEOGRAPHY FOR ENQUIRING MINDS)

**OCR Level 1/Level 2 GCSE (9-1)
in Geography B (Geography for
Enquiring Minds)**

J384

For first teaching in 2016

J384/02 Summer 2025 series

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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. 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

J384/02 'People and Society' is one of three examinations contributing to the GCSE 'Geography for Enquiring Minds'. For 2025, this examination covered all the human geography components from the specification; Urban Futures, Dynamic Development, UK in the 21st Century and Resource Reliance. In addition, this examination required candidates to consider an unseen human fieldwork scenario and reflect on an aspect of their human geography fieldwork.

To do well on this paper, candidates needed to be able to demonstrate that they have knowledge and understanding of a range of issues that affect people and places at a range of scales from local to global. Candidates needed to exhibit competent mathematical skills which are transferable into a geography context covering graphicacy, numeracy and the interpretation of statistical evidence.

Most successful candidates demonstrated an understanding of command words and keywords, particularly in extended writing questions. Centres promoting effective writing skills through scaffolding and writing frames was clearly evident in many candidate's responses; in high scoring responses, ideas were thoroughly developed, and all aspects of the question were addressed. Their responses competently referred back to the question, including the vocabulary of the question in their response. Understanding core principles of geography exemplified through case studies is intrinsic in the success of candidates on this paper. Those who could write effectively about ways of life in specific cities, the accuracy and relevance of Rostow's development model, the strategies for managing an ageing population and the sustainability of bottom-up food security initiatives did well on this paper. Many candidates were competent at constructing an argument in extended writing questions worth 6 or 8 marks, and there was some evidence of pre planning writing structures from many candidates. Many candidates responded well to the human geography fieldwork question, demonstrating that they could apply fieldwork practices and understanding to an unseen fieldwork investigation.

The paper was completed by almost all candidates; very few appeared to have run out of time. The standard of handwriting and the legibility of papers remains a challenge for examiners, but candidate's SPaG was generally good. The paper was both challenging and differentiated, allowing access to achieve for all candidates.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:
- understood the command words of each question and were competent in responding appropriately - understood subject-specific vocabulary and used specialist geographical terms in context - demonstrated good numeracy skills through calculating 'the range' and 'total percentage' - demonstrated good graphicacy skills through the interpretation of maps, assorted graphs and a population pyramid - wrote well-developed, place specific statements in relation to Case Study examples - thoroughly evaluated the merits and drawbacks of bottom-up initiatives to promote sustainability and reduce food insecurity - reflected on the effectiveness of the data presentation techniques they had employed in their human fieldwork investigation - evaluated the success of fieldwork techniques employed in an unseen human fieldwork investigation.	- misinterpreted the question - wrote simple statements without explanation or development - demonstrated a limited understanding and use of geographical vocabulary - calculated a total percentage through selecting and adding the relevant values - identified patterns demonstrated through maps and data - described an LIDC city - described levels of development in their chosen LIDC - identified an initiative to reduce food insecurity - named one of the data techniques they had chosen to use - described fieldwork techniques, most typically the ones they had chosen to use in their human fieldwork investigation.

Section A overview

Section A includes four questions focussing on Urban Futures, Dynamic Development, UK in the 21st Century and Resource Reliance.

Question 1 (a) (i)

Urban Futures

- 1
(a)
(i) What is a **megacity**?

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

This question was answered correctly by most candidates. Most successful candidates wrote '10 million' in their response. Candidates who were less successful attempted to write the figure 10,000,000 and were caught out by the number of zero digits required.

Question 1 (a) (ii)

- (ii) Select the **most** appropriate way of displaying the data from the table.

- A Histogram
- B Line graph
- C Located proportional symbols
- D Pie chart

Write the correct letter in the box.

[1]

This question was answered incorrectly by most candidates. Few candidates were able to successfully select **C**, 'located proportional circles'. Potentially due to this being a technique they are less familiar with or due to not understanding the relevance to the data.

Assessment for learning



Candidates should practice drawing and interpreting a range of graphs and diagrams. There is a list in the [specification](#) of all the cartographic and graphical skills that questions could be based on.

Question 1 (a) (iii)

(iii) Calculate the **range** in the population of the megacities.

You **must** show your working.

..... [2]

Most candidates were given 2 marks for this calculation, recognising they needed to subtract the lowest from the highest to be successful. Fewer candidates selected the first figure listed in the table and the last figure listed in the table, which was incorrect.

Question 1 (a) (iv)

(iv) State **two** consequences of rapid urban growth in LIDC cities such as Dhaka.

- 1
-
- 2
-
- [2]

This question was answered well by most candidates. Overcrowding, overpopulation, growth of informal settlements were the most common responses. There were a few answers where pollution was written with no further qualification. Most candidates listed negative consequences of rapid urban growth.

Assessment for learning



From September 2025, we have made an update to specification reference 5.2.a. To make sure more appropriate terminology we have replaced 'squatter settlements' with 'informal settlements'. This will be first assessed in the summer 2027 exams.

You can read more in our [what's changed guide](#) and our [subject update](#).

Question 1 (b)

(b) What does 'suburbanisation' mean?

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

Many candidates were able to get the mark for this question, however there were also many who were not able to provide a definition for suburbanisation. Most candidates wrote about the movement of people from the city into the suburbs, rather than the expansion of the city outwards.

Question 1 (c)

CASE STUDY – LIDC or EDC city

Name of city you have studied

(c) Explain different ways of life in the city.

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

Most candidates were given Level 2 for this question. Lagos, Mumbai, Nairobi, Rio de Janeiro and Istanbul were the case studies most commonly featured. Almost all candidates chose to write about life in informal settlements versus life in wealthier areas. However, many did not develop their points, rather describing the conditions and features of these settlements in simple, listed statements. Many candidates' responses were weighted heavily with details about the informal settlements such as Dharavi and Makoko, followed by simple statements about the 'opposite way of life'. Place specific detail was evident in most responses, often very well demonstrated through named areas and statistics about the residents of the city. Other 'ways of life' commonly used were diverse cultures and ethnicity. Candidates writing about Istanbul were able to name a variety of areas of the city but included little detail regarding 'ways of life'. The most successful candidates wrote about the challenging transport issues in Istanbul and how the congestion impacted on residents' ways of life. Where an AC city was used, it was mostly London or Birmingham (given max Level 2 (3 marks)). In a few instances, candidates identified an LIDC rather than a city within an LIDC.

Question 2 (a)

Dynamic Development

2

(a) What is meant by the geographical term '**development**'?

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

Many candidates wrote about 'improvement' but did not qualify this simply stating that the country improved/changed. Very few candidates were able to offer a definition of the term. Candidates who were most successful linked their explanation to improvements in development indicators such as Gross Domestic Product (GDP), life expectancy, literacy rates, etc.

Question 2 (b)

(b) Select the **correct** statement from the list below.

- A Every country in South America is an EDC
- B Most LIDCs are found in Africa
- C Most LIDCs are found in Asia
- D There are no LIDCs in Oceania

Write the correct letter in the box.

[1]

Most candidates were able to select the correct response, which was **B**.

Question 2 (c)

(c) Explain **one** physical factor which may lead to **uneven** development.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

..... [3]

Almost all candidates were able to identify a physical factor, with only a few stating a human factor instead. 'Landlocked' was the most common physical factor selected by candidates, with other candidates selecting 'climate'. Most candidates got 2 of the 3 marks for a valid way in which the physical factor can lead to uneven development, but they were not able to develop their reasoning beyond a single initial explanation.

Assessment for learning



Encouraging candidates to extend their thinking beyond the initial response is crucial in gaining full marks on these 3-mark questions. Candidates need to always consider how many marks are on offer for the question (even highlighting it on the exam paper). This is a good indication of how many development points they need to make against the '**one**' physical factor they are asked for. Candidates needed to identify a physical factor which may lead to uneven development then extend their thinking to explain how it contributed to uneven development in a country.

It is worth centres repeatedly asking the candidates 'why?' to extend their thinking.

Question 2 (d)*

CASE STUDY – How has an LIDC developed so far?

Name of LIDC you have studied

(d)* For your LIDC, discuss the extent to which it has followed **Rostow's model of development**.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

..... [8]

Many candidates demonstrated a sound knowledge and understanding of Rostow's development model and were able to identify the stages (mostly using numbers rather than the titles of each stage) and characteristics of each stage. There were some very good responses where candidates were able to explain in detail how their chosen country followed Rostow's model, using accurate place specific detail. Ethiopia, Zambia and the DRC were the most common case studies used. A few candidates were able to point out that this model was based on European countries, so their chosen country did not fit the model, they were also able to point out and give examples of how their country followed a fluctuating pattern rather than Rostow's linear pattern of development. (see Exemplar 1).

Some candidates wrote descriptions of the development indicators of their chosen LIDC, especially in reference to the Millennium Development Goals, these responses were full of accurate data quoting development statistics but made little reference to the development characteristics outlined in Rostow's model. A few responses made reference to Rostow's development model in the first and last lines of their response and wrote a generic development description for their country without linking any of the points to the model.

Exemplar 1

Zambia has only followed the Rostow's model to some extent. This is because the Rostow's model is based of AC countries and it doesn't include the factors such as colonialism; ACs got richer and developed through colonialism. Thus it's not fair as Zambia was colonised by the UK until the late 20th century, which heavily impacted its development. Thus, Zambia had a delayed start and it had to loan from the IMF for support, going up to \$6.5 billion. Thus Zambia can't be really compared to Rostow's model as it is not fair.

However, since the \$6.5 billion debt relief from IMF, Zambia had been able to invest in other infrastructure, such as the secondary and tertiary sector. Moreover, ever since copper's price increased, Zambia had exported a lot of copper and made profit. This profit is used for Zambia's development and thus one could argue that Zambia is slowly beginning to follow Rostow's Model as development is evident. [8]

In conclusion, even though initially, Zambia struggled to follow the Rostow's Model, recently it is following it, due to investments from foreign countries, debt relief and copper price increase.

In this exemplar, the candidate refers to the development of Zambia dating back to colonialism; this is useful in setting the context of the country's development and the reasons why the candidate believes the country does not follow Rostow's model of development. The candidate identifies that the model is based on the pattern of development demonstrated by Advanced Countries (ACs), and therefore, due to a number of factors, Zambia (a current LIDC) does not follow the linear progression set out by Rostow's model. This candidate uses accurate place specific detail and characteristics of the model to support their response. This candidate was credited at Level 3.

Question 3 (a)

UK in the 21st Century

3

(a) Explain **one** reason **why** secondary sector employment in the UK has declined.

.....

.....

.....

..... [2]

Few candidates were given 2 marks for this question. Many candidates incorrectly referred to an increase in tertiary/quaternary employment as a reason for the decline in secondary sector employment or a preference for people to work in a different named employment sector. Many candidates also referred to increased 'technology' rather than an increase in the use of 'machinery/automation' in manufacturing. Most correct responses referred to the relocation of factories overseas and the availability of cheaper labour or minimum employment laws in LIDCs or EDCs.

Question 3 (b)

(b) What is an '**economic hub**'?

.....

..... [1]

Many candidates were able to write a definition of an economic hub. The most commonly written were references to businesses or Transnational Companies (TNCs) being focused in an area – generating income/money.

Question 3 (c) (i)

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

(i) What is the **total** percentage of people who are in the 70–79 age range?

You **must** show your working.

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

Most candidates were able to complete this calculation. A few candidates hadn't realised that the data in the population pyramid was given in percentages, and therefore, when they had completed the addition of the four bars = 8.6, they then tried to do an extra calculation which resulted in the wrong answer. These candidates were given 1 mark for the correct initial calculation.

Question 3 (c) (ii)

(ii) Which of the following statements about the population pyramid is **correct**?

- A** The highest percentage of people are in the 25–29 age group
- B** The smallest percentage of people are in the 5–9 age group
- C** There are more females than males in the 35–39 age group
- D** There are more females than males in the 80–84 age group

Write the correct letter in the box.

[1]

Most candidates were able to select the correct response, which was **D**.

Question 3 (d)

(d) What does the cartoon suggest about older people in the UK in the 21st century?

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

Candidates were able to relate the cartoon to old people working or being technologically skilled. There were a few uncomplimentary answers related to older people's frailty, their confusion with technology or them being dangerous because of the warning sign.

Question 3 (e)

(e) Evaluate the **effectiveness** of the UK's responses to an ageing population.

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

Most candidates referred to the extension of the retirement age and the provision of pensions. These were generally developed quite well, with many candidates achieving Level 3 (see Exemplar 2). Some candidates wrote about additional funding for the NHS, which not only benefits elderly residents of the UK and the building of new care homes, both of which could be questionable as many council-backed care homes have been closing down around the country. Some candidates referred to free bus passes, encouraging a higher birth rate and strategies to encourage the immigration of young people to balance out the dependency ratio.

Many candidates wrote about the implications of an ageing population with both benefits and disadvantages but did not outline any strategies developed to manage the situation. These candidates were credited at Level 1.

Exemplar 2

~~saving~~ — ↑ retirement age - GDP school
 Evaluate the effectiveness of the UK's responses to an ageing population.

Some may argue that raising the retirement age ^{to 67/68} was the most effective response to the ageing population. This is because it is a confident way that the government can ensure that they will stay in employment. As a result, more GDP can be contributed, especially due to the fact that they ^{may} have senior roles in tertiary / quaternary jobs. ~~Conse~~ This means that this can be invested into schools and the NHS. Consequently, this is ~~the~~ most effective as it ~~confidently~~ can be effective as elderly use the NHS x4 more, ~~than the rest of the~~ so by contributing more to the NHS, this reduces chances of strikes and allows them to be well cared for. Consequently, it is the most effective because it has a large economic gain and can be well enforced by the government and can be helpful in the long-term. (6)

However, some may argue that encouraging migration, for more NHS workers is more effective. This is because it allows young - well-educated students to firstly buy accommodation and contribute more GDP to the economy. Consequently, this is long-term as they are *

In this exemplar, the candidate refers to the 'raising of the retirement age' as a strategy employed in response to an ageing population. The candidate demonstrates a well-developed response by identifying the subsequent benefits to the government in receiving continued tax contributions and the potential for further investment in the NHS. This would subsequently help with an ageing population and may reduce industrial action meaning the health service would be a reliable service supporting elderly people. This extract of the candidates' response demonstrates achievement at a Level 3.

Question 4 (a)

Resource Reliance

4

(a) Describe **two** ways that the mechanisation of farming has modified ecosystems.

1

.....

2

.....

[2]

Many candidates were able to achieve full marks on this question by referring to the impact on habitats, wildlife, river ecosystems and the general reduction in biodiversity. Some candidates wrote about the impact of mechanisation on farming and were given 0 marks.

Question 4 (b) (i)

(b) Look at **Fig. 5** in the Resource Booklet.

(i) What is the main type of **food** consumed in Somalia?

..... [1]

Almost all candidates got this mark.

Question 4 (b) (ii)

(ii) Suggest **one** way that this data presentation could be **improved**.

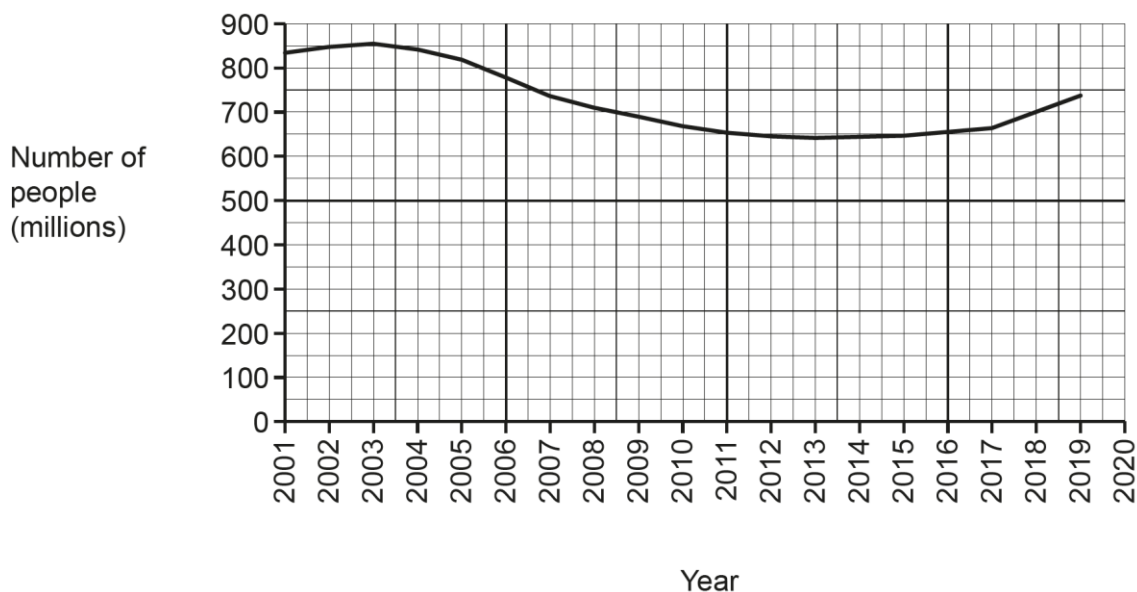
.....

..... [1]

Almost all candidates got this mark; few candidates wrongly suggested an alternative data presentation technique.

Question 4 (c) (i)

(c) Look at the graph, which shows the number of people in the world who are undernourished.



In 2020 there were 770 million people who were undernourished.

(i) Plot this data on the graph above.

[1]

Most candidates got the mark for this question. Some candidates plotted the point but did not join it up to the existing line or incorrectly plotted the point and were given 0 marks. There were some candidates who did not answer this question.

Question 4 (c) (ii)

(ii) Which **one** of the following statements is **true** about the graph?

- A The biggest decrease in the number of people who are undernourished was between 2001 and 2003
- B The biggest decrease in the number of people who are undernourished was between 2017 and 2020
- C There were fewer people undernourished in 2017 than there were in 2005
- D There was no change in the number of people who were undernourished between 2009 and 2014

Write the correct letter in the box.

[1]

Most candidates were able to select the correct response, which was **C**.

Question 4 (c) (iii)

(iii) Suggest an **alternative** graph which could be used to show this information.

..... [1]

Almost all candidates got this mark, suggesting a bar chart.

Question 4 (d)

(d) Discuss the sustainability of **one bottom-up** approach to food security.

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

Most candidates were able to correctly identify a bottom-up approach to food security, with Goat Aid in Tanzania (which they knew well) being the most common response. Food banks, allotments and urban gardens were less commonly referenced by candidates, but they were also well written. Many candidates were able to reference economic and environmental sustainability in their response and were able to write well-developed statements about the initiative these were given Level 3. Some candidates wrote a thorough description of the approach without reference to its sustainability or reference to food security; these were limited to Level 2 (3 marks).

Section B overview

Section B examines candidates' understanding of human geography fieldwork.

Question 5 (a)

Human Geography Fieldwork

5

- (a) For a human geography fieldwork investigation which you have completed. Justify **one technique** you used to present your data.

.....

.....

.....

..... [2]

While most candidates correctly identified a presentation technique, many wrote about a fieldwork data collection technique instead. Bar graphs were the most common presentation techniques, and most candidates referred to the ease of drawing/creating and visualising. A few candidates simply wrote descriptions of the technique they had used without justification.

Question 5 (b) (i)

- (b) Some geography students were conducting a fieldwork investigation into the impact on the high street of an out-of-town shopping centre. They visited the high street on a Wednesday morning to collect their data.

Look at **Fig. 6a** in the Resource Booklet.

- (i) Suggest **two** ways in which they could use the photograph as part of their investigation.

1

.....

2

..... [2]

Some candidates wrote about the use of the photograph for comparing, illustrating, and counting 'features'. Some candidates described what the photograph showed without reference to how it may be **used** for a fieldwork investigation.

Question 5 (b) (ii)

(ii) What is the **total** environmental quality score?

- A -2
- B 1
- C 2
- D 3

Write the correct letter in the box.

[1]

Most candidates were able to select the correct response, which was **B**.

Question 5 (b) (iii)

(iii) Suggest a different **fieldwork technique** which could have been used by the students and explain why it would be useful.

.....

.....

.....

..... [2]

Questionnaires were the most common technique suggested by candidates, alongside traffic or people counts. Candidates were not, however, able to give a relevant justification for their choice related to its usefulness in this fieldwork study.

Assessment for learning



Candidates understanding what the question requires them to do is obviously key to their success. Regularly employing strategies such as highlighting command words or underlining keywords in the question will allow candidates to determine what the question is asking them to do. In this question and in Question 5 (b) (i), many candidates had missed a key instruction in the question and so were only partially given credit or given no credit at all.

Question 5 (c)*

(c)* Evaluate the fieldwork techniques used by the students and suggest how they could be improved.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

..... [8]

 Spelling, punctuation and grammar [3]

Most candidates referenced the environmental quality survey and land-use survey, while the photograph was included in far fewer responses. Candidates' limitations focused on bias/subjectivity and the fact that these surveys were only carried out once. Candidates were generally able to suggest improvements to these techniques, such as more detailed categories or repeating the techniques at the out-of-town shopping centre for comparison. There were some very good responses with well-developed and thorough evaluation of the techniques used and suggested improvements (see Exemplar 3). Some candidates referred to only one fieldwork technique and there were a few candidates who wrote about their own human fieldwork or physical fieldwork.

Exemplar 3

The environmental quality survey is useful because it assesses the social, environmental and economic sustainability of the site. However, it can be very opinionated and biased and different people may think different things and get different scores. ~~The~~ ~~land~~ One way that it could be improved is to take the scores ~~from more than~~ in a group and collectively decide ~~the~~ the scores with multiple inputs. The land use survey is useful because it helps us to see what the buildings are used for and compare the amounts of the different types. ~~This method could be~~ not be useful as only a small area is surveyed. ~~This~~ could be improved by taking more data further down the street.

In this exemplar, the candidate evaluates the effectiveness of the environmental quality survey and the land-use survey. The candidate makes developed statements about both the limitations of the data collection methods and suggested strategies to improve the technique. However, the statements are not well-developed because the candidate does not then describe how the suggested improvements to the methods would be beneficial and would improve the overall effectiveness of the investigation.

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