

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

J384/01 Summer 2025 series

Contents

Introduction	3
Paper 1 series overview	4
Section A overview	5
Question 1 (a) (i)	5
Question 1 (a) (ii)	6
Question 1 (a) (iii)	6
Question 1 (b)*	7
Question 2 (a) (i)	9
Question 2 (a) (ii)	9
Question 2 (b) (i)	10
Question 2 (b) (ii)	11
Question 2 (c)	12
Question 3 (a)	14
Question 3 (b) (i)	15
Question 3 (b) (ii)	16
Question 3 (c) (i)	16
Question 3 (c) (ii)	17
Question 3 (d)	17
Question 4 (a) (i)	18
Question 4 (a) (ii)	18
Question 4 (b) (i)	19
Question 4 (b) (ii)	19
Question 4 (b) (iii)	19
Question 4 (c)	20
Section B overview	21
Question 5 (a) (i)	21
Question 5 (a) (ii)	22
Question 5 (a) (iii)	22
Question 5 (a) (iv)	22
Question 5 (b)	23
Question 5 (c)*	24

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 1 series overview

J384/01 is the first of three components that contribute to the GCSE 'Geography for Enquiring Minds' qualification. It provides candidates with the opportunity to demonstrate their geographical knowledge, understanding and skills.

The aim of this examiner's report is to provide valuable insights into overall candidate performance, pointing out areas where candidates did well and areas for improvement. It will also offer guidance on assessment for learning opportunities and any misconceptions to help prepare centres for future assessments, by analysing common challenges faced by candidates.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:
• knew case study details • were able to write about fewer ideas in more detail • used geographical language precisely and coherently • balanced explanation and evaluation equally where required • integrated case study detail throughout the response.	• wrote generically about locations or landforms • did not conflate aspects of different examples into one response • wrote simple statements • described in great depth when the question did not require it • used language that hindered understanding • put all of the case study detail into the opening introduction • did not complete all the graphs.

Section A overview

Section A includes multiple-choice or short-answer questions followed by a high mark question, often based on a case study. The short-answer questions assess descriptions and explanations, geographical, mathematical, and cartographical skills. The higher mark questions (6 and 8 marks) assess candidates' extended writing abilities and their capacity to link understanding and evaluation with place-specific evidence in the context of the question.

Question 1 (a) (i)

1

(a) The diagram below shows a tectonic plate boundary.

The image of a tectonic plate boundary has been removed due to third party copyright restrictions.

(i) Add the **two** labels below to the diagram above.

magma

oceanic crust

[1]

Most candidates were able to correctly label the diagram.

Question 1 (a) (ii)

(ii) Identify the plate boundary shown in the diagram above.

- A conservative
- B constructive
- C destructive
- D traction

Write the correct letter in the box.

[1]

C was the correct answer and the most common response. Some candidates drew little arrows next to each possible response to help work out the correct answer.

Question 1 (a) (iii)

(iii) Explain how earthquakes can be caused at this type of plate boundary.

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..... [3]

There are three parts to the process that were credited. The plates moving together, the build-up of pressure and then the sudden release of that pressure. Most candidates were awarded some marks for identifying parts of the process; however, the lack of precise geographical language did obscure the meaning of some responses. The use of the word subduction to describe the movement of one plate under the other leaves no ambiguity about the process being described.

Question 1 (b)*

CASE STUDY

A natural weather hazard event

Name of weather hazard event

(b)* Evaluate the consequences of **either** a flash flood **or** a tropical storm.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

..... [8]

A Level 3 response required the candidate to demonstrate thorough knowledge of their case study (AO1), with a thorough analysis of the impacts (AO3) and a reasonable evaluation (AO3). This would be shown by writing in a logical and structured style that included well-developed ideas and included place-specific detail.

Most candidates were able to identify the correct case study to base their response on, with Typhoon Haiyan and Boscastle being the two most common. Responses included place-specific details such as the death toll, the destruction of specific buildings or the number of cars washed out to sea. Paragraphs were constructed around a specific consequence with some candidates using economic, social and environmental consequences to help provide structure. This meant that most responses were given Level 2, but the level of analysis and evaluation provided was limited so the responses could not be credited at Level 3.

Some candidates used more than half the space provided to describe the causes of the hazard, including wind speeds, storm surge heights, valley shapes and the role of bridges. While the knowledge displayed was accurate, the information did not help answer this question. Some candidates also wrote speculatively, as if the hazard has just occurred, and provided generic consequences that might happen. There has been enough time since the hazard events occurred, Boscastle (2004) and Haiyan (2013), for the long-term consequences to be known and understood. Boscastle did not suffer from a cholera and typhoid epidemic due to the influx of dirty water into the village.

Misconception



El Niño and La Niña are not weather hazards. These terms are used to describe fluctuations in the Earth's climate.

Here are resources to support your teaching:

[National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration](#) (NOAA) [What are El Niño and La Niña?](#)

Met Office - [What are El Niño and La Niña?](#)

Exemplar 1

Name of weather hazard event Flash flood - Cumbrian Floods 2015

(b)* Evaluate the consequences of **either** a flash flood **or** a tropical storm.

Due to the Cumbrian Floods, there were significantly negative social and economic consequences. During the flooding, ~~over~~ over 5000 homes were flooded and over 60,000 were left ~~with~~ without power, leading to 1800 people having to be evacuated across Cumbria. The damage to properties meant that many of these people were ~~temp~~ temporarily homeless and had to spend time living in rescue centres and emergency shelters. 40 schools were also closed, leading to over 3000 children being unable to attend as some schools closed for the rest of the term - this had a negative impact on many children's education. Further, as many shops were flooded, their products were damaged/ruined and ~~they~~ businesses suffered economic losses during the Christmas season. Even after the flooding, a lot of money had to be invested in preventative measures such as flood defences by the government, which would cost taxpayers - £2.6 bn was spent on this. However, ~~any~~ environmental consequences ~~to~~ of the flooding were not as severe, as the flooding mainly impacted urban areas. There were also potentially positive consequences as people had improved awareness of flood risks and climate change (which made the event 40% more likely). Overall, though, consequences were negative. [8]

In this exemplar, the candidate provides a large amount of place-specific detail, so the response is evaluating the Cumbrian Floods and not any generic flash flood. There are well-developed ideas in the first part of the response, such as evacuation, schools and education. Together, these two ideas demonstrate thorough knowledge of the consequences. The candidate does not just describe what has occurred but adds valued judgements to the response to show evaluation. Phrases like 'severe' and 'significantly negative' as well as considering positive and negative consequences allow this response to be awarded Level 3.

Assessment for learning



Candidates should practice describing, explaining and evaluating the causes, consequences and responses to weather and tectonic hazards.

Question 2 (a) (i)

Changing Climate

2

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

(i) Suggest how the cave painting could be used as evidence for climate change.

.....

.....

.....

..... [2]

Most candidates were able to identify that the woolly mammoth had adapted to a cold environment and that they had gone extinct partly due to the change in climate. It was clear that some candidates had not looked in the Resource Booklet.

Question 2 (a) (ii)

(ii) State **one** reason why cave paintings may **not** be reliable as evidence of climate change.

.....

..... [1]

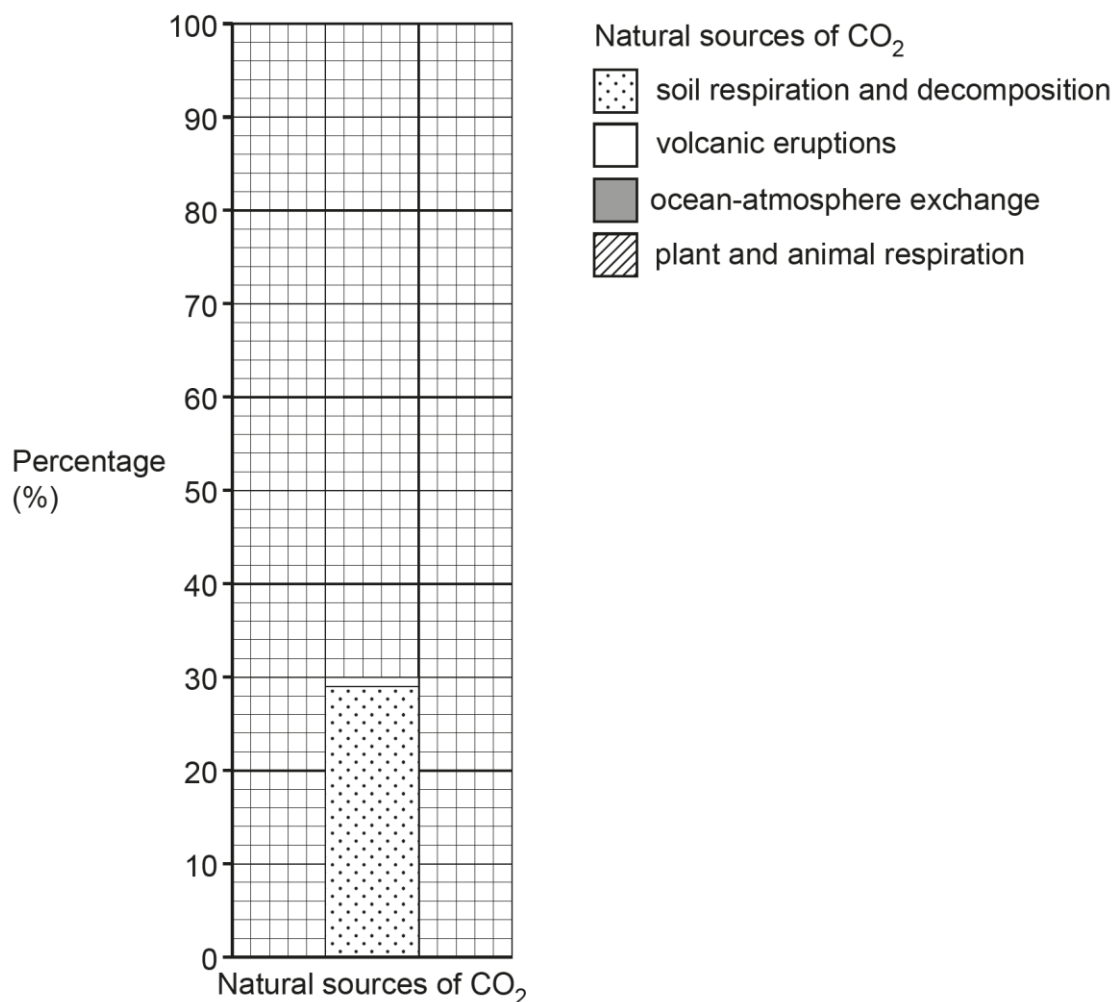
Most candidates identified that a painting could be exaggerated, fictional or that there was no exact dating. Candidates need to be precise with the language used to make sure that their meaning is communicated accurately.

Question 2 (b) (i)

(b)

(i) Using the data in the table below, **complete** the divided bar graph showing natural sources of CO₂.

Ocean-atmosphere exchange	42%	
Plant and animal respiration	28%	



[2]

The question asks for the creation of a divided bar graph; however, many candidates placed the bars next to the existing bar and not on top of the two pre-drawn categories. Some candidates placed their bars directly on top of the 'soil respiration and decomposition' bar drawing over 'volcanic eruption'. This was given credit assuming the candidate left 1 percent blank at the top of the bar.

Question 2 (b) (ii)

(ii) Describe **one** way Milankovitch cycles can cause natural climate change.

.....

.....

.....

..... [2]

Candidates either had a clear understanding of the cycles, with eccentricity being the one that was described most frequently, or they left the response blank, or tried to link their response to greenhouse gases. To achieve 2 marks, candidates had to name and describe the cycle then link the cycle to changes in climate.

Misconception



A widespread misconception is associated with the idea that the Milankovitch cycles change the average distance of the Earth from the Sun/the total amount of solar energy incident at the top of the atmosphere. Only the eccentricity cycle changes the distance of the Earth from the Sun. In a more elliptical orbit, the Earth is **not** further away from the Sun throughout the year. At some points, it is closer and at some points it is further away. Overall, there is **not** less solar energy incident at the top of the atmosphere throughout the year, it balances out/averages out to be approximately the same.'

Guidance provided by the [Royal Meteorological Society](#) in their document 'Misconceptions in Geography Assessments', available to OCR assessors and examiners.

Assessment for learning



To support your teaching the [Royal Meteorological Society](#) has a Weather and Climate Teacher Guide.

Question 2 (c)

(c) Evaluate how humans have contributed to the enhanced greenhouse effect.

.....

.....

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.....

..... [6]

To achieve 6 marks, a candidate had to show thorough understanding of the ways humans have contributed to the enhanced greenhouse effect and use well-developed ideas that thoroughly evaluated the human contribution. There are a variety of different human activities that candidates could write about with burning fossil fuels, cattle and rice farming, and deforestation being the most popular. Evaluation could be shown with comments on the amount of a gas produced, importance of the gas and its role in trapping solar energy or attempts by humans to mitigate the influence of the gas. Evaluation was the most challenging aspect of the question, with many candidates commenting that it was an important contributor or that lots of gas was produced. Some candidates provided very detailed explanations of how the greenhouse gases trap longwave solar radiation; however, this accurate knowledge was irrelevant and was not credited. The persistent misconception by candidates around the role of the ozone layer in trapping solar radiation was also seen here.

Assessment for learning



To support your teaching the [Royal Meteorological Society](#) has a Weather and Climate Teacher Guide.

Exemplar 2

Human activities such as burning fossil fuels and agriculture have contributed greatly to the enhanced greenhouse effect. This is because to meet our energy demands, we burn ~~tons of~~ tonnes of coal, oil and natural gas (e.g. for electricity and to power vehicles), releasing greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide and nitrous oxide (which is 250 times more potent than CO_2 at retaining thermal energy). These gases trap infrared radiation within the atmosphere, leading to the enhanced greenhouse effect. Agriculture, such as cattle ranching and growing rice paddy fields, releases methane, another greenhouse gas, only enhancing the greenhouse effect further. Although humans also use (and are increasing the use of) energy sources that do not release greenhouse gases – e.g. wind, tidal and solar energy – these make up a small proportion of the energy generated. The fact ~~that~~ that average global ~~the~~ temperatures have risen by 1°C since 1880 [6] suggests that humans have contributed significantly to the greenhouse effect.

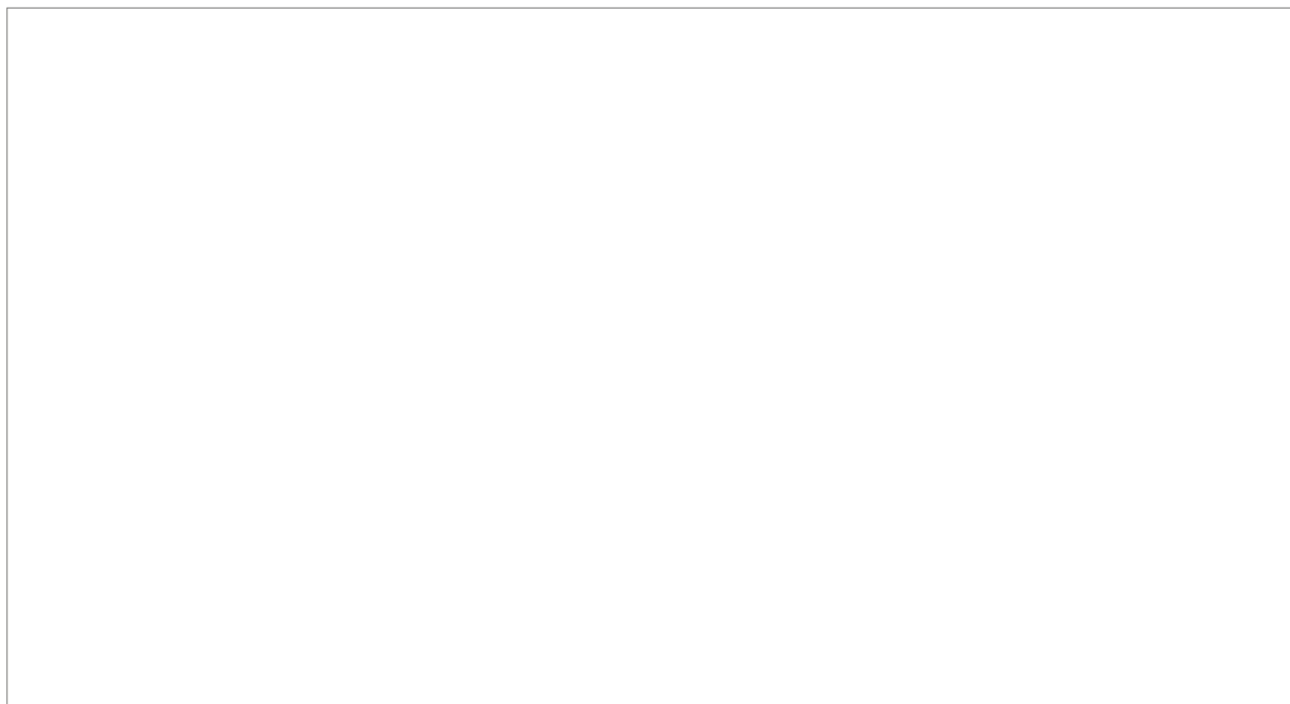
In this exemplar, the candidate explains the impact of human activities including energy generation and agriculture. The gases (carbon dioxide, nitrous oxides and methane) are identified, and their formation is explained in detail. There is a thorough evaluation of energy generation. The candidate uses the word greatly at the start and identifies the potency of the gas as part of the evaluation of energy generation. They then extend the evaluation in the second half of the response, showing the role of renewable energy, and that this is a small proportion of the total. The section on methane is not so well-developed, with only a basic evaluation; however, the overall quality of the response means that 6 marks could be awarded.

Question 3 (a)

Distinctive Landscapes

3 Look at **Fig. 2** in the Resource Booklet.

(a) Use the photograph to draw a labelled sketch of this glaciated landscape.



[2]

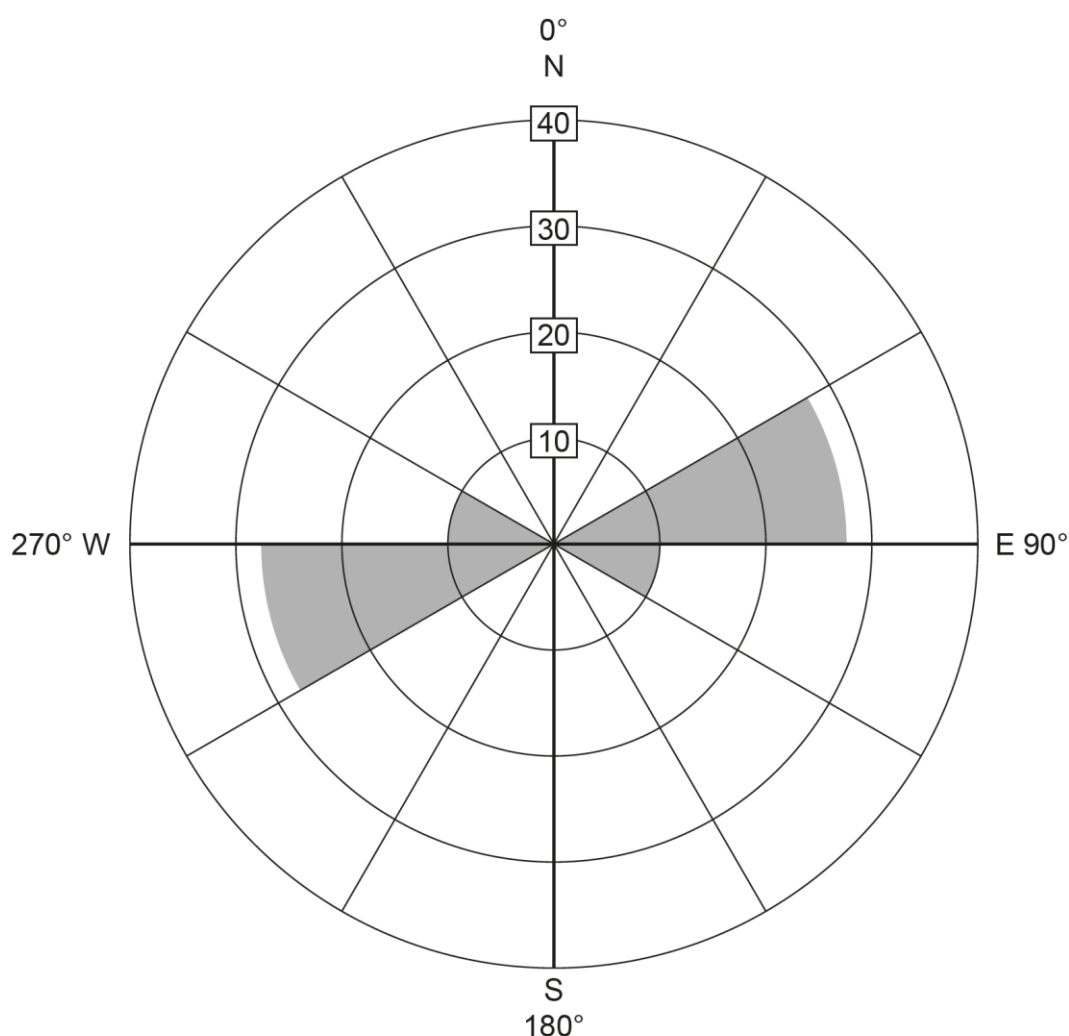
Most candidates were able to produce a sketch and add some labels. Some candidates drew a plan view rather than a sketch, and this was not credited. It should be noted that candidates did not need to use glaciated landscape terminology such as pyramidal peak or arête as this question was assessing their geographical skills and not their knowledge. U-shaped valley was a term that candidates used, but they needed to make it clear whether they were referring to a U or a V shaped valley as sometimes handwriting can make it ambiguous.

Question 3 (b) (i)

(b) Rocks carried in glaciers can erode by scratching the ground surface beneath the ice. Students collected data showing the direction of these scratches in a glaciated valley.

(i) Use the data in the table below to **complete** the rose chart.

Direction	Number of scratches
0–30° and 180–210°	20
31–60° and 211 to 240°	35



[2]

Most candidates were able to complete the graph accurately, although this question was left blank by many candidates.

Assessment for learning



Candidates should practice drawing and analysing 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 3 (b) (ii)

(ii) In which direction does the data in the rose chart suggest the glacier was travelling?

- A East-west
- B North-south
- C Northeast-southwest
- D Northwest-southeast

Write the correct letter in the box.

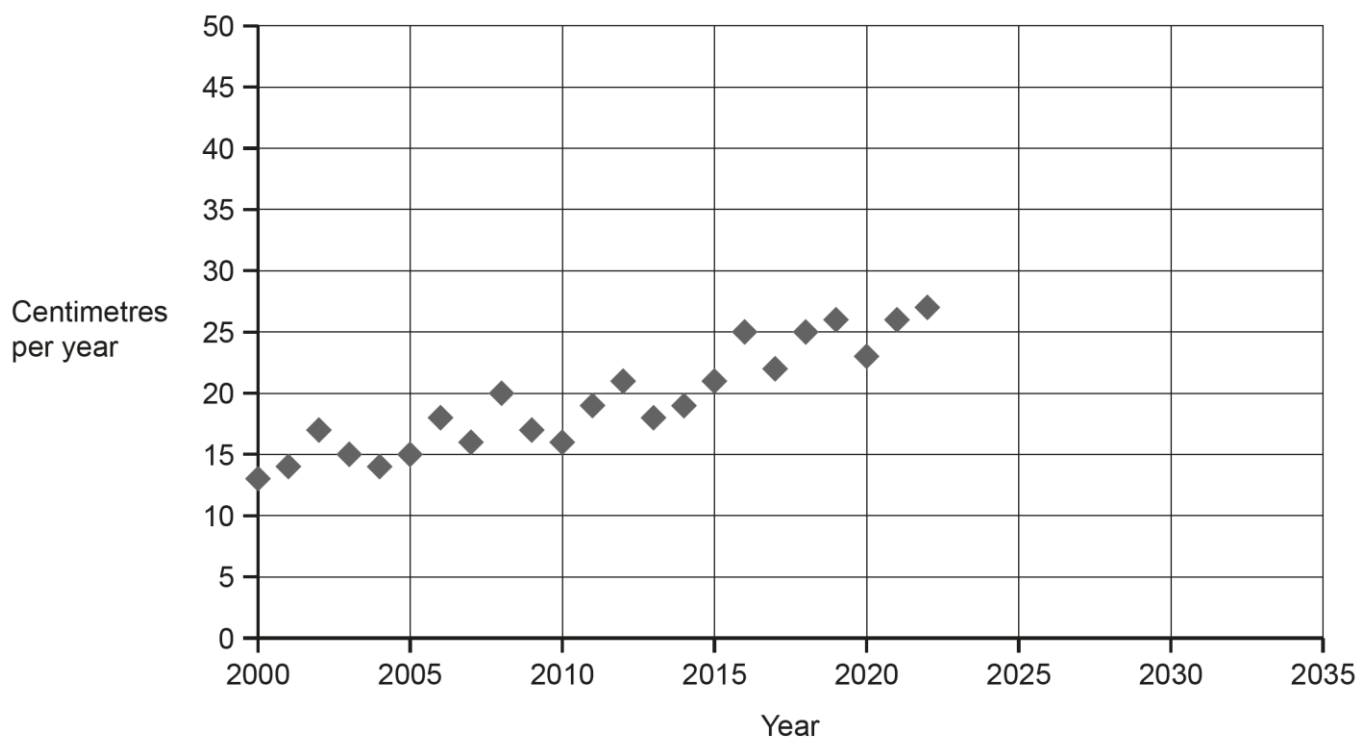
[1]

Most candidates were able to provide the correct answer, **C**, even when they had left Question 3 (b) (i) blank, showing that they could interpret the diagram accurately.

Question 3 (c) (i)

(c) Look at the scatter graph below showing rates of coastal erosion over time.

(i) Draw a **best fit line** on the scatter graph.



[1]

Most candidates were able to draw a line of best fit. A few candidates were not able to get a similar number of points each side of their line. Some candidates made their line pass through the origin.

Question 3 (c) (ii)

(ii) Use your **best fit line** to predict the rate of coastal erosion in 2035.

- A 15 cm
- B 20 cm
- C 35 cm
- D 50 cm

Write the correct letter in the box.

[1]

Most candidates were able to provide the correct answer, **C**. Some candidates did not link their answer to this question to the previous question (Question 3 (c) (i)), either misdrawing the line despite getting this question correct or drawing the line correctly but then providing the incorrect answer to this question.

Question 3 (d)

CASE STUDY

UK coastal landscape

Name of UK coastal landscape

(d) Explain the formation of **one** coastal landform in this landscape.

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.....

..... [6]

To be awarded Level 3, candidates needed to display thorough knowledge of **one** coastal landscape and thorough understanding of its creation using place-specific details to provide a clear and logically structured reply. Candidates who were awarded Level 3 identified one specific landform, with Old Harry, Durdle Door, Lulworth Cove and Spurn Point being the most common ones. Candidates provided place-specific detail such as the types of rock, direction of longshore drift (LSD) or prevailing winds. This ensures that the response can be awarded more than 3 marks. The responses then use appropriate geographical language to explain the sequence of steps that lead to the formation of this landform.

Less successful responses did not identify a landform. Instead, they tried to write about the Jurassic or Holderness coast more generally or were descriptive, identifying that a cave became an arch and that collapsed to form a stack, with no attempt to explain.

The most common error that stopped candidates from achieving more marks was a lack of place-specific detail, leading to a generic answer that could relate to multiple different landforms around the world. The name of the landform is not enough place-specific detail.

Question 4 (a) (i)

4

(a) **Overfishing** is when too many adult fish are removed so there are not enough remaining to breed and sustain the population.

Look at **Fig. 3** in the Resource Booklet.

(i) Suggest how **overfishing** of Arctic cod by humans could affect this Arctic food chain.

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..... [2]

This question was generally answered well, and candidates were able to explain the impact on leopard seals, polar bears and krill. The question refers to this Arctic food chain, so candidates needed to refer to animals in the figure and not write more generally about food chains for the marks to be awarded.

Question 4 (a) (ii)

(ii) Outline **two** other impacts human activity could have on polar environments.

1.

.....

2.

..... [2]

Candidates needed to identify the human activity they were writing about and the impact on the polar environment. Most responses linked to burning fossil fuels and the impact on melting ice and oil spills and their impact on the food chain. It is important for candidates to make sure the impacts in their response are sufficiently different from each other.

Question 4 (b) (i)

(b) Scientists collected data on the height of Arctic land plants. The data is shown in the table below.

	Plant height				
	Up to 0.5 cm	0.6–5 cm	5.1–15 cm	15.1–40 cm	40.1–200 cm
Number	9	6	4	3	1

(i) Select the **most** suitable way to present the data in the table.

- A Climate graph
- B Histogram
- C Line graph
- D Radial graph

Write the correct letter in the box.

[1]

Most candidates were able to provide the correct response, **B**. Some candidates annotated option D with a question mark, possibly indicating that they did not recognise this type of graph.

Question 4 (b) (ii)

(ii) Identify **one** weakness in the data shown in the table above.

.....
 [1]

The uneven class boundaries and the large class between 40.1-200cm were the two most common responses.

Question 4 (b) (iii)

(iii) Suggest **one** way a weakness in the data shown could be reduced.

.....
 [1]

Providing more even class boundaries or dividing the final class in two or more classes were the most common responses.

Question 4 (c)

CASE STUDY

Global sustainable management in the Antarctic or Arctic

Name of Antarctic or Arctic example

(c) Explain how your global sustainable management example offers a sustainable solution for polar environments.

.....

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..... [6]

To achieve Level 3, candidates needed to display thorough knowledge of their example with a thorough understanding of how their example sustains the polar environment using well-developed ideas with clear place-specific detail.

Responses about the polar regions always highlight several misconceptions that reduce the marks that can be given to the response. These include:

- writing about the Arctic Treaty and references to polar bears conflating the two locations in one answer
- writing about indigenous whaling in Antarctica
- reference to the Antarctic Peace Treaty
- placing every strategy in the Antarctic under the Antarctic Treaty, including the IAATO rules on tourism and the IWC's rules on whaling.

Candidates were able to write about several strategies (nuclear tests, drilling for oil, scientist's waste) but generally provided a sentence on each before moving on to the next strategy. This does not provide well-developed ideas, so a maximum of 4 marks could be awarded. Level 3 responses identified one or two strategies and explained them in detail, writing a paragraph on each to make sure that there was a high level of development.

Assessment for learning



Candidates should practice writing extended paragraphs on one idea and not changing to another idea too soon.

Section B overview

Section B asks candidates to look at the measurements of a groyne and provides details on the fieldwork that has been conducted. The short-answer questions ask candidates to use their mathematical skills to analyse the data and then to form a conclusion. The long-answer question then asks candidates to assess and then evaluate their own data collection.

Question 5 (a) (i)

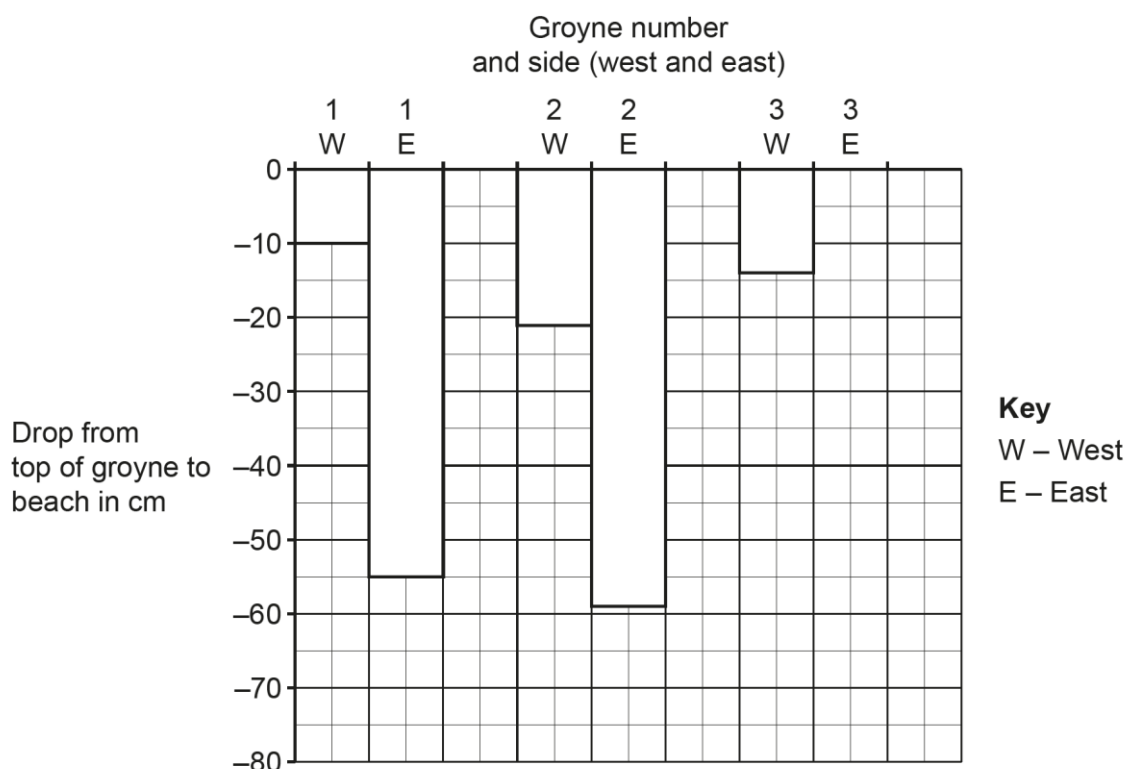
Physical Geography Fieldwork

- 5 Geography students were investigating the effect of groynes on longshore drift at a beach.

Longshore drift is the movement of sediment along the coastline in the direction of the prevailing wind. A groyne is a structure, usually made of wood, which can be built on a beach to try to prevent longshore drift.

The students measured the drop from the top of three groynes to the beach on both the west and east sides.

The graph below shows the drop from the top of the groyne to the top of the beach on the west and east side of the three groynes.



(a)

- (i) The drop from the top of the groyne to the beach on the east side of groyne number three was -63 cm.

Use this data to **complete** the graph above.

[1]

This was accurately plotted by most candidates.

Question 5 (a) (ii)

- (ii) Calculate the **mean** drop from the top of the groyne to the beach on the **west** side of the 3 groynes.

You **must** show your working.

..... cm [2]

Most candidates were able to calculate the mean accurately. The most common error candidates made was to calculate the mean for all six values for the east and west of the groyne.

Question 5 (a) (iii)

- (iii) Identify the **range** of the drop of the top of the groyne to the beach on the **east** side of the 3 groynes.

- A 11
- B 20
- C 8
- D 15

Write the correct letter in the box.

[1]

Candidates successfully dealt with negatives values and identified that **C** was the correct answer.

Question 5 (a) (iv)

- (iv) Identify **one** factor that could have affected the data collected on the beach.

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

Wind strength and direction, the risk of human error, beach nourishment and damaged groynes were the most common responses. Candidates need to be aware that one-word responses like 'wind' or 'people' do not provide enough detail for the mark to be awarded.

Question 5 (b)

- (b) Suggest **one** conclusion that the students could make about the effect of the groynes on longshore drift.

.....

.....

.....

..... [2]

This question provided a complex challenge for candidates, as they needed to be able to work out where the sand is being trapped and the direction of longshore drift, correctly identifying that sand is moving from the west to the east. Most candidates were able to state that the groyne was stopping or reducing the rate of longshore drift, but this seemed to come from knowledge of how groynes work rather than an understanding of the diagram. Candidates need to communicate their understanding clearly as there were contradictory statements which received no credit. An example of this is that there is more sand on the west of the groyne showing LSD is going west.

Question 5 (c)*

(c)* You will have carried out physical geography fieldwork.

Fieldwork title

.....

To what extent was your primary data collection successful in allowing you to reach a conclusion?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

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

 Spelling, punctuation and grammar **[3]**

The Level 3 descriptor asks that candidates provide a thorough evaluation of the primary data collection and then for them to link this to a thorough judgement about whether this allowed a meaningful conclusion to be reached. The responses that were given the most credit had a clear hypothesis/question stated – this was usually around the Bradshaw Model or the effectiveness of sea defences. The most successful responses were able to provide an evaluation of the data collection. This evaluation often focused on the precision of the measurements or the representativeness of collecting the data from a limited number of sites or days. This information was then used to provide a detailed judgement about the validity of the conclusion in relation to the original question posed. Less successful responses focused on a less clearly defined question, such as coastal fieldwork, or described the fieldwork in great depth without any evaluation of its successfulness. Other responses evaluated the fieldwork but made no reference to either the initial question or the validity of the conclusions reached.

Assessment for learning



Centres should make sure that the fieldwork candidates complete allows them to access the full range of marks and that the fieldwork has a clear key question that is not too wide in scope and allows them to use relevant data collection techniques.

Exemplar 3

(c)* You will have carried out physical geography fieldwork.

Fieldwork title How does the River Tillingbourne change as it moves downstream?

To what extent was your primary data collection successful in allowing you to reach a conclusion?

Our primary data collection, to a large extent, was successful in allowing us to reach a conclusion.

One of our primary data collection methods was timing how long it took a corkscrew to float 10m at different courses of the river. This was successful in allowing us to develop a conclusion as the data (time taken) was quantitative, meaning we were not only able to take repeat readings to calculate a mean for each site but also we were able to compare our findings from each site which meant that we were able to identify trends and patterns about how the velocity of a river changes as you move downstream. However, a limitation of the primary this collection method was that it was difficult to [8]

5(c) accurately gain a reading as the corkscrew would not float ~~at the~~ linearly on a linear manner, meaning that we often got in the way. This would decrease the validity of the conclusion we reached about how the river's velocity changes downstream.

A second method of primary data collection we used was using a metre stick to measure the depth of the river. This ~~was~~ was less successful in allowing us to reach a conclusion as the water flowing through the river made it difficult to read off one clear value, which ultimately affected the validity of our conclusion. Although, it was easy to take repeat readings in order to identify any anomalies and calculate a mean. Similarly, we were unable to measure the depth of every site, as certain areas of the River Tillingbourne were too dangerous to wade it. This affected our conclusion massively as it meant that

5(c) our data was not representative of the whole river course.

In this exemplar, the candidate is studying the River Tillingbourne and whether it fits the Bradshaw Model. In the first part of the response, they identify that the data collection was successful, identifying the type of data collected and the benefits of this. It is in the second half of the response that the candidate links more directly to the conclusion and allows this response to reach Level 3.

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