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Examiners' report

GCSE

GEOGRAPHY A (GEOGRAPHICAL THEMES)

OCR Level 1/Level 2 GCSE (9-1) in Geography A (Geographical Themes)

J383

For first teaching in 2016

J383/01 Summer 2025 series

Version 1

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Contents

Introduction

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

The reports will include a general commentary on candidates' performance, identify technical aspects examined in the questions and highlight good performance and where performance could be improved. A selection of candidate 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.

Paper 1 series overview

Paper 1, Living in the UK today, covers aspects of the human, physical and environmental geography of the UK. For candidates to be successful they needed to:

- have a working knowledge of the general geography of the UK
- know the content as displayed in the specification, including key geographical terms. The examination questions are derived from the specification, so the candidates need to know it well
- practice how to write a clear and precise geographical explanation
- apply case study knowledge and understanding
- learn how to structure responses to higher order command words such as 'evaluate' and 'to what extent do you agree'
- practice using and interpretating all the geographical skills, particularly graphs, in the specification, in preparation for this component (the first of three components).

The paper in this series differentiated well among candidates in that examiners saw the full range of marks. Most candidates found the paper accessible, and it is clear they were well prepared. Most candidates managed to complete their responses in the hour allocated.

There were many examples of high-level responses, particularly in the three level response questions, with candidates mostly making good attempts to develop their points. Many candidates were able to demonstrate the skill of evaluation effectively in Questions 2 (c) and 3 (d) using implicit evaluation and/or a final conclusion.

This paper contained questions requiring the completion of graphs and calculations that candidates should be properly equipped for. For all three papers in this specification, they need a black biro, a pencil, a ruler and a calculator. Without all of these items, it was more difficult to successfully respond to Questions 2 (a) (i) and 3 (b).

Candidates who did well on this paper generally:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:
• were able to include a full sequence of landform formation and included processes • showed good knowledge of the geographical terms used in the specification, such as transport, sustainable strategies, slumping and suburbanisation • included evaluation and judgement throughout their responses • developed their explanations beyond simple statements, using place-specific details to support these where necessary • showed competent and accurate mathematical and graphical skills.	• confused types of transport • found it difficult to interpret generic words used in the specification, which appeared in questions, e.g. impacts, slumping, ratio • did not complete the paper • completed graphs and maps inaccurately • used few connectives to explain • made little reference to place-specific detail.

Question 1 (a) (i)

Landscapes of the UK

1
(a)
(i) Which **geomorphic transport process** is defined as 'sediment bouncing along the sea bed?'

A Saltation
B Solution
C Suspension
D Traction

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

Many candidates correctly identified saltation as the correct answer.

Question 1 (a) (ii)

(ii) Explain why the mass movement process of **sliding** occurs on cliffs at the coast.

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

Many candidates got sliding confused with slumping or falling. The most successful responses either focused on the ground becoming saturated, heavy and sliding due to gravity or the bottom of the cliff being eroded, leaving the top of the cliff unsupported, causing the cliff to slide due to gravity.

Question 1 (a) (iii)

(iii) Explain how an **arch** is formed at the coast. You may use a diagram.

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

Many candidates responded to this question well and drew clear diagrams of this landform. Most were able to identify that cracks are eroded and enlarged to form caves and caves erode through the headland to form an arch. Fewer candidates explained a process of erosion.

Misconception

Many candidates thought that erosion formed the crack, rather than this being a feature already there as a result of the rock being formed.

Question 1 (a) (iv)

(iv) Explain **two** impacts of human activity on the coastal landscape.

1 .....

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2 .....

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[4]

Candidates responded well to this question, with many identifying two coastal defences and explaining clearly how they worked. Other popular impacts were tourism, litter and buildings. Some candidates identified the creation of nature reserves too.

Question 1 (b)

CASE STUDY – a UK river basin

Name of UK river basin .....

(b) Explain the formation of **one or more landforms** in your chosen river basin.

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

The most successful responses were generally about waterfalls, with candidates identifying hard rock overlying soft rock. The soft rock is being eroded by abrasion and hydraulic action to form a plunge pool. An overhang being created that collapsed into a plunge pool and the waterfall retreating upstream forming a gorge, were examples of such responses.

Successful responses included place-specific details such as the name of the waterfall, height and geology.

Many candidates that responded with meanders, oxbow lakes, levees and floodplains were unable to explain clearly how the features were formed and rarely included a full sequence of the formation.

Exemplar 1

Name of UK river basin River Tees

Explain the formation of **one or more landforms** in your chosen river basin.

River Tees is in the north-east of the UK with mouth opening to the north sea. 1 main landform is a Highforce waterfall. At 23m hieght. It located in the upper course ~~which~~ with hard rock (mainly whitmen) ~~and~~ on top, and soft rock at the bottom (mainly ~~sandst~~ clay + Sandstone). Erosion such as attrition and abrasion erode the soft rock underneat the hard rock behind the waterfall faster then the hard, more resilient rock. Creating an overhang. After a while gravity and the overhang matchic cause it to break from the top and fall into the plunge pool. ~~Erosi~~ Corrosion is also present due to this process. Overtime this has and will be repeat causing waterfall to retreat over time and grow in hieght. [6]

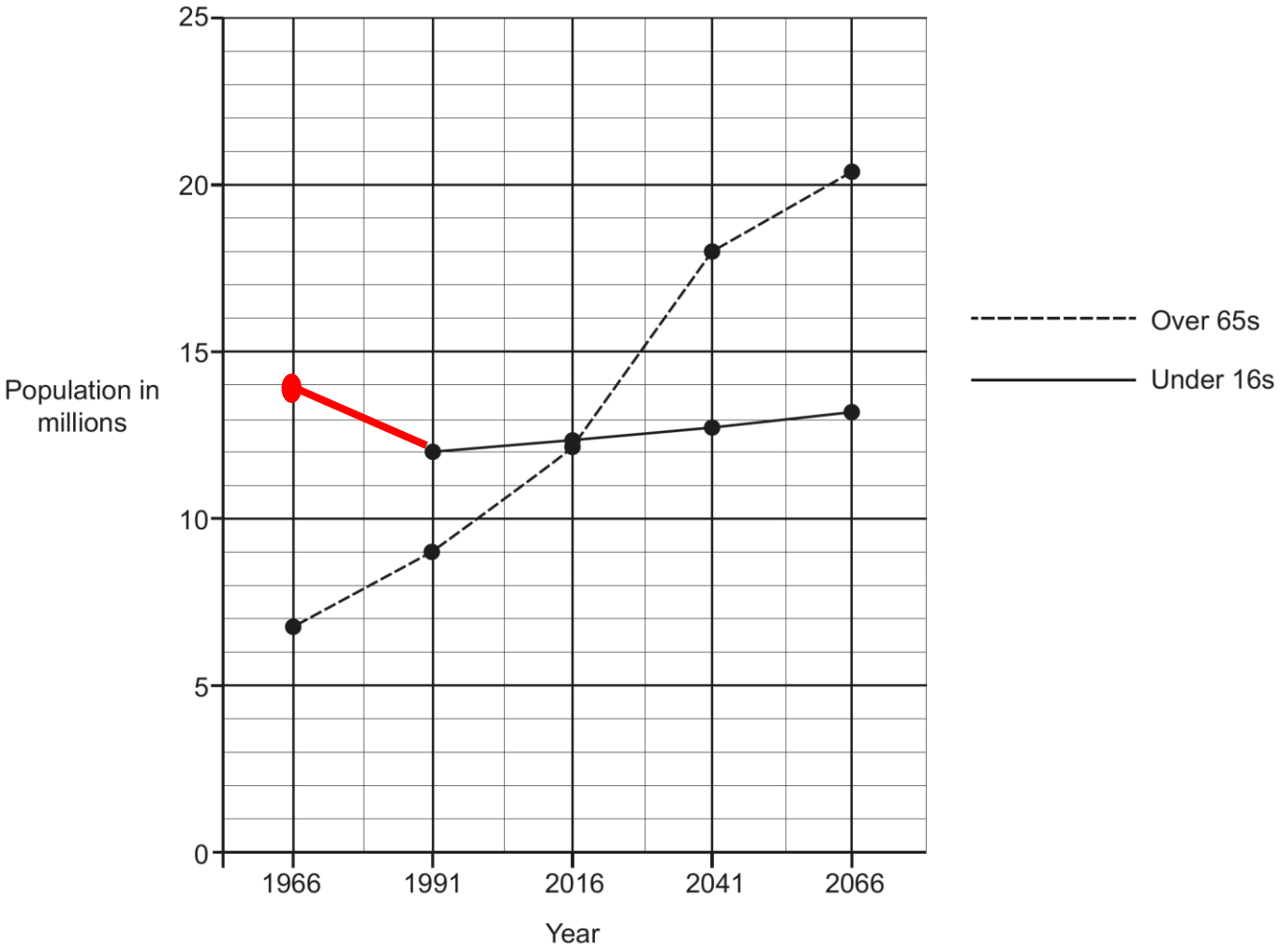
This exemplar includes a clear sequence of waterfall formation with place-specific information including the name of the waterfall and its height. This response had thorough knowledge and understanding and was awarded Level 3, 6/6.

Question 2 (a) (i)

People of the UK

2

(a) Look at the graph below, which shows UK population change, 1966–2066 (predicted).



(i) **Complete** the graph using the data below. **[1]**

Year	Under 16s
1966	14 million

Most candidates plotted the graph accurately.

Question 2 (a) (ii)

(ii) What was the **ratio** of over 65 year olds to under 16 year olds in 1991?

A 1:1
B 3:4
C 13:18
D 13:21

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

Most candidates interpreted the graph accurately, identifying nine over 65 year olds to twelve under 16 year olds. They were then able to simplify the ratio to 3:4.

Question 2 (a) (iii)

In 2016 the population of the UK was 66 million.

(iii) Use the graph to calculate the **percentage** of the population who were over 65 in 2016.

Calculate your answer to **one decimal place**.

You **must** show your working.

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

Most candidates were able to correctly calculate the percentage between 18.2 and 18.6 percent. Some of them incorrectly rounded the final figure.

Question 2 (a) (iv)

(iv) Describe changes in the number of over 65 year olds between 1966 and 2066.

Use data from the graph in your answer.

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.....

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

There were many good responses to this question, with most candidates securing 2 out of 3 marks. Most candidates identified an increase and interpreted data from the graph accurately. Fewer candidates identified a second change, which was required by the question, such as the steep predicted increase from 2016–2041.

Question 2 (a) (v)

(v) Suggest possible **impacts** of the changes in the over 65 year olds shown on the graph.

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

Many candidates did well on this question, with the most common responses including the rise in NHS and care home demand, increased pension costs and age, decrease in taxes paid to the government and lower birth rate. Some also identified positive changes including looking after grandchildren, volunteering and spending the grey pound.

OCR support

Many candidates answered with the causes of an ageing population rather than the impacts. This is a list of command words and their meanings to share with candidates.

Question 2 (b) (i)

(b)
(i) Define the term '**suburbanisation**'.

.....

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

Some candidates were able to define this correctly, identifying people moving to the edge of the city or the city growing outwards. However, many candidates defined it as increase in people moving to the suburbs. As this response did not outline where the suburbs were in the city, it was not given credit.

Question 2 (b) (ii)

(ii) State **two environmental impacts** of suburbanisation.

1 .....

.....

2 .....

.....

[2]

Candidates generally responded well to this question, with common responses including damage to habitats, loss of biodiversity and the impact on air pollution from more people commuting.

Question 2 (c)*

CASE STUDY – major city in the UK

Name of major UK city .....

Challenges in cities include housing, transport and waste.

(c)* Evaluate the success of sustainable strategies to overcome **one** of these challenges in your chosen city.

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.....

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.....

.....

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

The question asked for **one** strategy. Therefore, if a candidate mentioned a second strategy, this was not credited. Causes of challenges were also not given credit. The most successful responses demonstrated an in-depth knowledge and understanding of the city studied. In general, candidates discussing waste and transport were more successful than those discussing housing as they had a greater variety of different strategies to discuss.

The question asked the candidates to evaluate, which could include candidates comparing the success of the different schemes or strengths and/or weaknesses of each scheme. This could be implicit or as part of a final conclusion.

Exemplar 2

Name of major UK city Cambridge

Challenges in cities include housing, transport and waste.

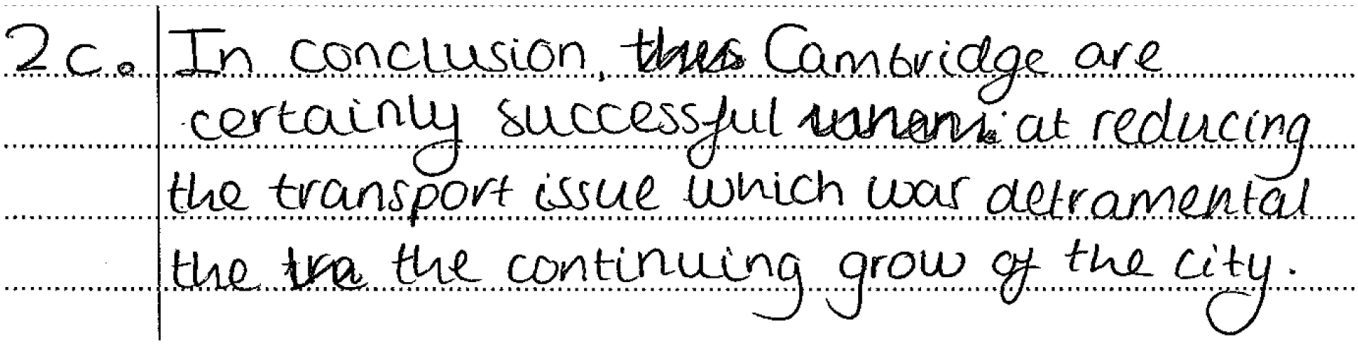
(c)* Evaluate the success of sustainable strategies to overcome one of these challenges in your chosen city.

Transport is Cambridges hardest challenges to overcome as many people commute there everday for work. In 2021 cambride was voted to 2nd most congested ~~cit~~ city in the UK ~~ther~~ however Cambride has been very successful at overcoming this problem.

First of all, the chisolm trail was ~~was~~ constructed for £20 million which ~~com~~ is connecting the new ~~trainstation~~ train station to the ~~cities~~ city's centre. Every day the path ~~see~~ will get on average 4000 journeys a day significantly reducing the amount of traffic on the roads.

Furthermore, in order to combat comutters there are plans for 4 park and ride schemes, with the biggest one ~~with~~ containing a staggering 5000 spaces. Therefore, certainly reducing the thousands of car journeys by commutters every day. [8]

In addition, Cambridge have finished constructing a second train station for ~~2~~ £280mil. This located new the science park which employes 7000 people therefore the construction of the station will reduce the amount of comuters who would otherwise be driving.



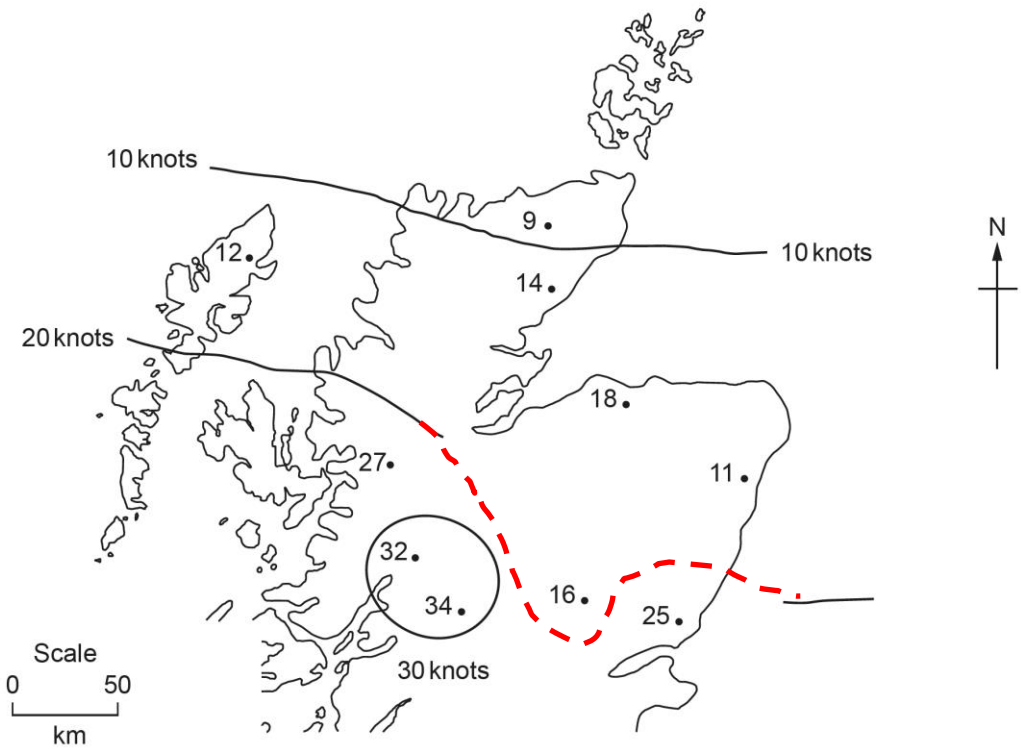
This candidate's exemplar outlines the need for sustainable transport in Cambridge. They then identify three sustainable transport schemes: the Chisolm trail, park and ride, and second station. Each scheme is explained, and the explanation includes place-specific details. There is implicit evaluation within the body of the response, for example 'certainly reducing car journeys' or 'significantly reduced congestion'. There is also a final conclusion. This response had thorough knowledge, understanding and evaluation and was awarded Level 3, 8/8.

Question 3 (a) (i)

UK Environmental Challenges

3

(a) Look at the isoline map below, which shows wind speeds in Scotland during Storm Franklin in February 2022.



(i) **Complete** the isoline for 20 knots on the map above. **[1]**

In general, candidates found this question challenging. Some left it blank, and some joined the two parts of the 20-knot line using a straight line. Some candidates correctly drew a line going beneath the 16-knot mark and above the 25-knot mark as indicated above. Centres should be encouraged to ensure this skill is covered in their teaching.

Question 3 (a) (ii)

(ii) How does wind speed change from the south west to the far north east of Scotland?

A Decreases
B Fluctuates
C Increases
D Stays the same

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

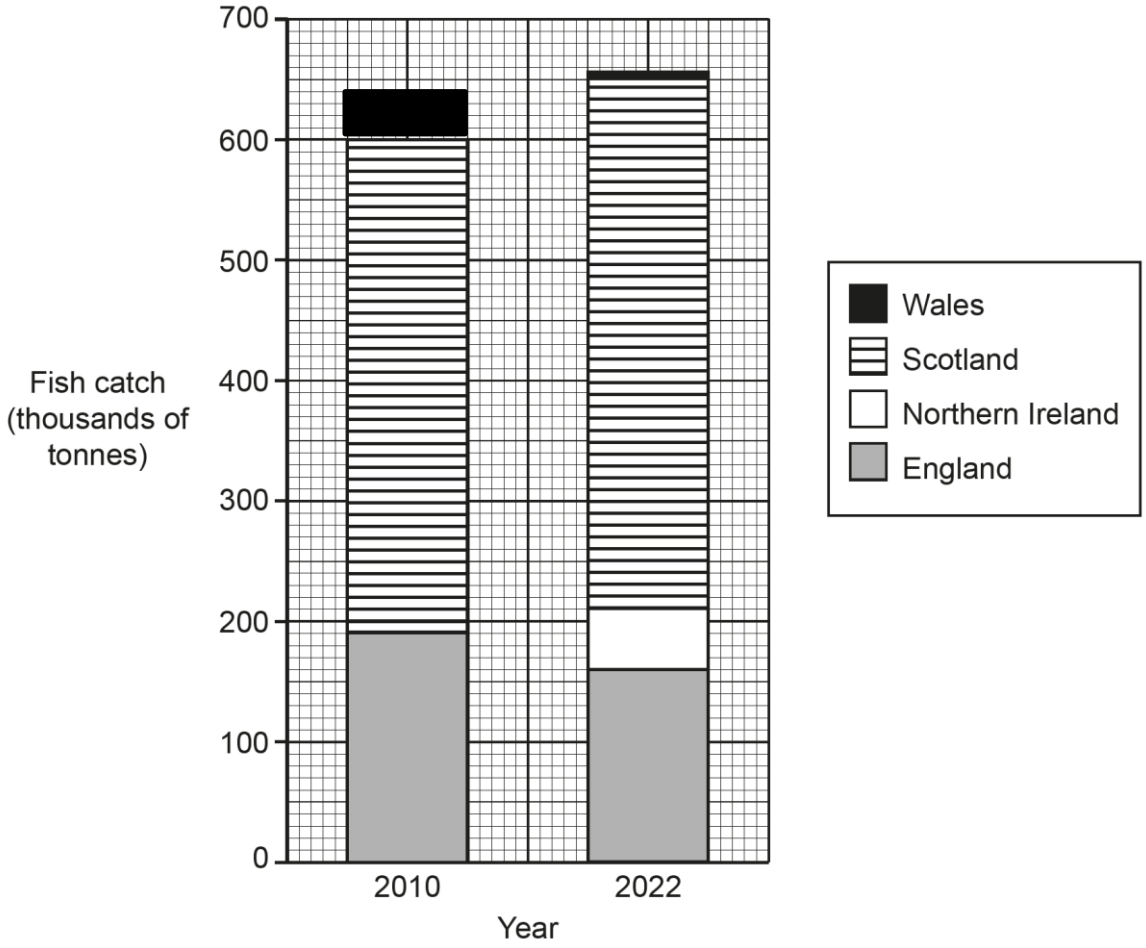
Most candidates correctly identified that the wind speed decreases.

Question 3 (b)

Look at the divided bar graph below, which shows the fish catch by UK fishing boats.

(b) Complete the graph for 2010 using the data below.

Country	Fish catch (thousands of tonnes)
Wales	40



[2]

Most candidates correctly plotted and shaded the Wales section of the graph, as can be seen plotted on the graph above. Candidates should use a pencil and ruler to draw this with accuracy. Some candidates were unable to plot a divided bar graph accurately and plotted the section at the bottom of the graph.

Assessment for learning

There is a teaching opportunity here for practising graph drawing skills, so candidates can answer these accurately in future examinations.

Question 3 (c)

Look at **Fig. 1** in the Resource Booklet.

(c) What does the picture show about the **impacts** of wind farms?

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

Candidates were able to suggest a range of ideas using the resource as a stimulus. Many identified the removal of habitats, the visual pollution caused by the turbines and the impact on bird migration as responses. Some also considered the impact of building so many facilities and the creation of jobs. A few candidates were confused by the reference to the figure in the resource booklet and instead tried to use the previous graph, mistakenly trying to refer to fish stocks in their response.

Question 3 (d)*

CASE STUDY – a UK flood event

Name of UK flood event .....

(d)* 'In your chosen flood event, effects on people were **greater** than effects on the environment.'

To what extent do you agree?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

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

Spelling, punctuation and grammar and the use of specialist terminology **[3]**

It was very pleasing to see that most candidates attempted to answer this question, and that very few candidates left it blank.

Most candidates responded to this question using the Somerset Levels floods of 2014. Other common responses were Storm Desmond, Cumbrian floods 2009 and the Boscastle floods.

Candidates introduced their river or flood with locational detail, rainfall figures and dates. They were mostly able to identify effects on people and the environment. Many were able to complement this with excellent place-specific detail such as the amount of rain, number of houses flooded, area of farmland flooded, number of people rescued and species of animal affected. They were able to show judgement using sentence starters such as 'on one hand' or 'on the other hand' and by including implicit evaluation such as 'this was significant because' or 'causing a much greater impact'. Many also drew their response together using a final conclusion, often considering the effects in the long term or short term, locally or nationally and economically, socially and environmentally. Less successful responses tended to be more generic in terms of the impact of the flood and lacked any developed evaluation, tending to focus solely on people rather than the environment.

Exemplar 3

Name of UK flood event Somerset flood 2014

'In your chosen flood event, effects on people were **greater** than effects on the environment.'

To what extent do you agree?

600 homes
- Farmers -sell -200mill
- Road closed -Muchelney.

6800 hectares
Burrows
Algal blooms

Somerset is in the southeast of England.

The Effects on people were greater ~~then~~ for example 600 homes were flooded, this lead to insurance costs tripling and insurance companies refusing to insure some homes. Moreover, Farmers had to sell cattle and evacuate this led to industrial collapse and lost of £200 million in revenue due to lack of tourism. Lastly, road closures ~~is~~ due to flooding lead to longer journey times, and some areas being unaccessible by road for example, a village named Muchelney was an accessable ~~unaccessable~~ by road for 2 months.

The effects on the environment was less significant. For example, 6800 hectares of land was flooded for 3 months, this damaged soil and destroyed habitats, meaning displaced wildlife displaced. Barn owls and birds died due to lack of small mammals to hunt and eat due to land being ~~flooded~~ flooded. Lastly, Surface runoff had swept fertilizers into rivers and ~~lakes~~ lakes causing algal blooms which absorb all the Oxygen for photosynthesis, this caused fish population to die.

Overall there was a greater effect on humans than the environment because the environment recovered quickly.

This exemplar identifies the impact on people including the impacts on housing, farming and road closures. The impacts on the environment included waterlogged soil, impact on mammals and birds and eutrophication. This is supported by development of each of these impacts and place-specific detail, including cost of damages, villages affected, area of farmland and species of animals. Implicit judgement includes 'the effects on people were greater' and 'the effect on the environment was less significant'. There is also a final conclusion. The knowledge and understanding here is comprehensive, and the judgement is thorough. Therefore, this response was awarded Level 4, 11/12.

Misconception

Many candidates thought that the government paid for all repairs after a flood. Teaching about the contribution of insurers and the impact on premiums would be useful.

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