CAMBRIDGE
International Education

Cambridge International AS & A Level

GEOGRAPHY **9696/23**

Paper 2 Core Human Geography **May/June 2025**

MARK SCHEME

Maximum Mark: 60

Published

This mark scheme is published as an aid to teachers and candidates, to indicate the requirements of the examination. It shows the basis on which Examiners were instructed to award marks. It does not indicate the details of the discussions that took place at an Examiners' meeting before marking began, which would have considered the acceptability of alternative answers.

Mark schemes should be read in conjunction with the question paper and the Principal Examiner Report for Teachers.

Cambridge International will not enter into discussions about these mark schemes.

Cambridge International is publishing the mark schemes for the May/June 2025 series for most Cambridge IGCSE, Cambridge International A and AS Level components, and some Cambridge O Level components.

[Turn over

Generic Marking Principles

These general marking principles must be applied by all examiners when marking candidate answers. They should be applied alongside the specific content of the mark scheme or generic level descriptions for a question. Each question paper and mark scheme will also comply with these marking principles.

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 1:

Marks must be awarded in line with:

- the specific content of the mark scheme or the generic level descriptors for the question
- the specific skills defined in the mark scheme or in the generic level descriptors for the question
- the standard of response required by a candidate as exemplified by the standardisation scripts.

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 2:

Marks awarded are always **whole marks** (not half marks, or other fractions).

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 3:

Marks must be awarded **positively**:

- marks are awarded for correct/valid answers, as defined in the mark scheme. However, credit is given for valid answers which go beyond the scope of the syllabus and mark scheme, referring to your Team Leader as appropriate
- marks are awarded when candidates clearly demonstrate what they know and can do
- marks are not deducted for errors
- marks are not deducted for omissions
- answers should only be judged on the quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar when these features are specifically assessed by the question as indicated by the mark scheme. The meaning, however, should be unambiguous.

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 4:

Rules must be applied consistently, e.g. in situations where candidates have not followed instructions or in the application of generic level descriptors.

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 5:

Marks should be awarded using the full range of marks defined in the mark scheme for the question (however; the use of the full mark range may be limited according to the quality of the candidate responses seen).

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 6:

Marks awarded are based solely on the requirements as defined in the mark scheme. Marks should not be awarded with grade thresholds or grade descriptors in mind.

Annotations guidance for centres

Examiners use a system of annotations as a shorthand for communicating their marking decisions to one another. Examiners are trained during the standardisation process on how and when to use annotations. The purpose of annotations is to inform the standardisation and monitoring processes and guide the supervising examiners when they are checking the work of examiners within their team. The meaning of annotations and how they are used is specific to each component and is understood by all examiners who mark the component.

We publish annotations in our mark schemes to help centres understand the annotations they may see on copies of scripts. Note that there may not be a direct correlation between the number of annotations on a script and the mark awarded. Similarly, the use of an annotation may not be an indication of the quality of the response.

The annotations listed below were available to examiners marking this component in this series.

Annotations

Annotation	Meaning	Use
	Correct point	Point-marked questions only: Section A, Section B part (a)
	Incorrect	Point-marked questions only: Section A, Section B part (a)
	Level 4	Levels-marked questions only: Section B part (c)
	Level 3	Levels-marked questions only: Section B parts (b) and (c)
	Level 2	Levels-marked questions only: Section B parts (b) and (c)
	Level 1	Levels-marked questions only: Section B parts (b) and (c)
	Level 0 – No creditable response	Levels-marked questions only: Section B parts (b) and (c)
Highlighter	Creditworthy part of an extended response	Levels-marked questions only: Section B parts (b) and (c)
	Evaluative point	Levels-marked questions only: Section B part (c)
	Omission or further development/ detail needed to gain credit	All questions
	Unclear or validity is doubted	All questions
	Developed point	All questions

Annotation	Meaning	Use
EG	Appropriate example or case study given	All questions
IRRL	Irrelevant	All questions
NAQ	Material that does not answer the question	All questions
	Highlighting a significant part of an extended response – to be used with another annotation e.g. IRRL or EVAL	Levels-marked questions only: Section B parts (b) and (c)
SEEN	1. Diagram or essay plan has been seen but no specific credit given 2. Additional page has been checked	1. Any diagrams or essay plans 2. All blank pages in the provided generic answer booklet and/or extension answer booklet(s).
R	Rubric error	Optional questions only (place at start of question not being credited): Section B (Candidates answer one question)

Examiners must consider the following guidance when marking the essay questions:

Candidates are free to develop their own approach to the question and responses will vary depending on the approach chosen. Whichever approach is chosen, essays which address the question and support their argument with relevant examples will be credited. There may be detailed consideration of a case study/one or more examples, or a broadly conceived response, drawing on several examples to illustrate the factors involved.

Section A

Answer **all** questions in this section. All questions are worth 10 marks.

Population

Question	Answer	Marks
1(a)(i)	**Table 1.1 shows population data for South America, 1960–2020.** **Using Table 1.1: state a decade which had the highest population growth rate.** 1980s or 1990s	**1**
1(a)(ii)	**Using Table 1.1: calculate the change in life expectancy between 1960 and 2020. Show your working.** 76.2 – 56.1 **(1)** = 20.1 years **(1)**	**2**
1(b)	**Using the data in Table 1.1, suggest why the population growth rate in South America is likely to be slower in the future.** Reasons could include: • rate of growth has steadily slowed – only 1.3% in 2020 • it is an ageing population so fewer births e.g. median age increased from 18 to 31 • life expectancy is high/increasing but improvement is slowing **1 mark** for each reason. If no use of data **max. 1 mark**.	**2**
1(c)	**Explain why an increase in life expectancy can cause problems for a government.** An increasing life expectancy would suggest that people are living longer as well as more children surviving into adulthood. Problems could include: • demographic e.g. an ageing population • economic e.g. increased costs of pensions, smaller workforce • social e.g. need for more health services • political e.g. tension between young and old • environmental e.g. urban sprawl due to housing demands, increasing demand for water **1 mark** for a simple explanation, **2 marks** for a developed explanation (with detail or an example).	**5**

Population/Migration/Settlement dynamics

Question	Answer	Marks
2(a)(i)	**Fig. 2.1 shows rural population change in Spain, an HIC in Europe, 2007–2021.** **Using Fig. 2.1: state the year in which population change was the greatest.** 2013	**1**
2(a)(ii)	**Using Fig. 2.1: calculate the mean (average) rate of population change. Show your working.** • Sum of +0.8, –0.2, –0.7, –1.4, –1.2, –1.0, –0.5, –1.2 **OR** +0.8 – 6.2 = –5.4 **(1)** • –5.4 / 8 **(1)** • = –0.675 **(1)** allow –0.67 or –0.68	**3**
2(b)	**Suggest two reasons why there has been out-migration from rural areas in HICs.** Reasons could include: • demographic e.g. lack of marriage partners, chain migration • economic e.g. lack of employment, low wages • social e.g. lack of facilities/educational opportunities/family • environmental e.g. climate change **1 mark** for each reason. Accept pulls to cities but do not credit reflexive pairs e.g. push of rural unemployment and pull of employment in urban areas, **max. 1 mark**.	**2**
2(c)	**Suggest why rural population may increase in the future in HICs.** This is mainly due to net migration, although accept positive natural increase if it is explained in the rural context. Reasons could include: • cheaper/larger houses available so people move in • birth rate rises/young families move in • increased tourism so more jobs • improved transport/communications (linked to broadband – remote working) • new development e.g. dam building • government policy to move people out of towns • influx of retired • other urban push factors e.g. air pollution, congestion, crime **1 mark** for a simple explanation, **2 marks** for a developed explanation (with detail or an example).	**4**

Settlement dynamics

Question	Answer	Marks
3(a)	**Fig. 3.1 shows major cities in western Africa.** **Describe the distribution of the major cities shown in Fig. 3.1.** Description of the distribution could include: • most/majority/just over half are on the coast – 13 out of 23 • most are the only one in their respective country • 3 are in one country (Lagos, Abuja and Kano) • few are in the centres of their respective country e.g. Ouagadougou, Abuja • they are fairly evenly spaced – especially on western coast • fewer in the north of the region **1 mark** for each descriptive point.	**4**
3(b)	**Suggest two reasons for the distribution shown in Fig. 3.1.** Reasons could include: • accessibility of coast • interior inhospitable • climate is better on the coast • trade / ports • colonial past • government planning/administration (e.g. Abuja – to promote interior development) **1 mark** for each reason.	**2**

Question	Answer	Marks
3(c)	**Explain why having only one major city in a country can be a disadvantage.** Candidates may explore the core vs. periphery idea with the resulting backwash effects. They may consider impacts on both the city and the country itself. Reasons could include: • excessive growth in one city – regions miss out, increasing inequality • transport/power infrastructure is focused on the city, peripheral regions remain disconnected and so are slow to modernise • possible friction with more remote areas – unrest and disengagement, which can lead to civil conflict • increased pollution, etc. in city carried forward to rest of country • migration to city – brawn/brain drain from rest of country, unemployment/underemployment/informal economy in city • city under pressure due to in-migration e.g. on education/health services, housing, power/water/sanitation infrastructure, waste disposal, etc. • vulnerable to attack/natural disaster • excessive political control from the city – gets first investment, etc. • political dominance of city means power is held by relatively few – may allow corruption **1 mark** for a simple explanation, **2 marks** for a developed explanation (with detail or an example).	**4**

Section B

Answer **one** question from this section. All questions are worth 30 marks.

Population

Question	Answer	Marks
4(a)(i)	**Outline the concept of 'optimum population'.** The concept of optimum population could be outlined as: • one in balance with the available resources so all are fed, housed, etc. • the population that is necessary for maximum utilisation and production of resources in a country at a given point of time • a condition where three parameters are maximised: the quality of life of all individuals, sustainability (a sustainable balance between environment and economy), and the room available for wild nature • where the population–resource relationship is balanced i.e. the number of people that can be sustained within a given area at a certain economic and technological level • a population that is large enough to provide an adequate workforce with minimal unemployment • when population is in balance with the carrying capacity of an area, its resources and this situation produces the best outcomes e.g. sustainability, economic output is high, quality of life is good **1 mark** for idea of best size of population. **2nd/3rd mark** for relating it to resources or employment or environment, etc.	**3**
4(a)(ii)	**Explain why it is difficult to measure the optimum population of an area.** Reasons could include: • there are different meanings of the term/it is a theoretical idea • both population and resources (availability, value) are dynamic so 'optimum' is constantly changing • peoples' perceptions of living standards are different • how can it be measured – what measures to use? • changes in technology/environmental change alters the 'optimum' • may differ in terms of economic, social, environmental 'optimums' • what scale of area offers measurement possibilities? **1 mark** for a simple explanation, **2 marks** for a developed explanation (with detail or an example).	**4**

Question	Answer	Marks
4(b)	**With the aid of examples, explain the challenges of increasing the level of food security in an area.** Food security is when all people, at all times, have access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs (and food preferences) for an active and healthy life. Challenges could include: • economic e.g. cost, labour supply, transport, power supply, food storage and/or processing infrastructure • social e.g. opposition from conservationists, increased demand due to rising population and/or income • political e.g. who gets what and who pays, ownership, civil unrest/war, role of TNCs (cash crops), government policies of imports/reactions to global events • environmental e.g. nature of the resources, locational aspects, pollution, water supply, soil degradation, disease, pests, climate change, etc. **Max. 4 marks** if no valid examples. Award marks based on the quality of explanation and breadth of the response using the marking levels below. **Level 3 (6–8)** Response clearly explains the challenges of increasing the level of food security in an area. Response is well founded in detailed knowledge and strong conceptual understanding of the topic. Examples used are appropriate and integrated effectively into the response. **Level 2 (3–5)** Response explains the challenges of increasing the level of food security in an area. Response develops on a largely secure base of knowledge and understanding. Examples may lack detail or development. **Level 1 (1–2)** Response is largely descriptive about increasing food resources. Knowledge is basic and understanding may be inaccurate. Examples are in name only or lacking entirely. **Level 0 (0)** No creditable response.	**8**

Question	Answer	Marks
4(c)	**With the aid of examples, assess the view that population growth will always exceed the supply of local resources.** Candidates may base their answers around the Malthus vs. Boserup debate. One approach could be to consider food production (farming improvements) versus attempts to manage population growth. Indicative: • population growth varies depending on BR, DR and net migration • population is itself a resource • population varies greatly in skills, age, etc. • resource base can change rapidly as technology increases, new resources discovered, imported, etc. Higher level responses will suggest this may vary over time, with scale, with location and the nature of both population and resources. The role of constraints – climate change, conflict. Award marks based on the quality of the response using the marking levels below. **Level 4 (12–15)** Response thoroughly assesses the view that population growth will always exceed the supply of local resources. Examples used are appropriate and integrated effectively into the response. Response is well founded in detailed knowledge and strong conceptual understanding of the topic. **Level 3 (8–11)** Response assesses the view that population growth will always exceed the supply of local resources but may be unbalanced. Examples may lack detail or development. Response develops on a largely secure base of knowledge and understanding. **Level 2 (4–7)** Response shows general knowledge and understanding of population growth and supply of resources. Response is mainly descriptive or explanatory with limited use of examples and understanding of the topic may be partial or inaccurate. Some concluding remarks. General responses without the use of example(s) will not get above the middle of Level 2 (6 marks). **Level 1 (1–3)** Response may broadly discuss population growth and/or resource supply but does not address the question and does not come to a convincing conclusion. Response is descriptive, knowledge is basic and understanding is poor. **Level 0 (0)** No creditable response.	**15**

Migration/Settlement dynamics

Question	Answer	Marks
5(a)	**Describe the causes of intra-urban migration (within the same urban area).** Note this does not include circulation such as commuting. Causes could include: • demographic e.g. for marriage, idea of life cycle • economic e.g. new job, retirement, increased or decreased wealth • social e.g. to live in same culture/ethnic group, move away from crime prone area, nearer to entertainment/recreation, move for family support • political e.g. to a more secure area, due to redevelopment/clearance of squatter settlements, land zoning policies, gentrification • environmental e.g. to a more pleasant environment such as to the coast, desire for open space **1 mark** for a simple description, **2 marks** for a developed description (with detail or an example) up to the maximum.	**7**

Question	Answer	Marks
5(b)	**With the aid of examples, explain why urban to urban migration has increased in recent years.** Candidates may consider economic, social, environmental push and pull factors but equally there are enabling factors such as: • improved mobility/transport • wider knowledge of other areas via media, internet, etc. • greater education so more choice of employment • reduction in family ties/cultural restrictions on moving • increased wealth so can afford to move • government policy such as decentralisation, urban renewal • more flexible/remote working, career changes are more common • relocation of businesses – employees follow • idea of chain migration Award marks based on the quality of explanation and breadth of the response using the marking levels below. **Level 3 (6–8)** Response clearly explains why urban to urban migration has increased in recent years. Response is well founded in detailed knowledge and strong conceptual understanding of the topic. Examples used are appropriate and integrated effectively into the response. **Level 2 (3–5)** Response explains why urban to urban migration has increased in recent years. Response develops on a largely secure base of knowledge and understanding. Examples may lack detail or development. **Level 1 (1–2)** Response is largely descriptive about urban to urban migration and how it has increased in recent years. Knowledge is basic and understanding may be inaccurate. Examples are in name only or lacking entirely. **Level 0 (0)** No creditable response.	**8**

Question	Answer	Marks
5(c)	**With the aid of examples, to what extent is it difficult for governments to manage urban to rural migration?** Management of internal migration often depends on the nature of the political regime e.g. China does but USA does not. Difficulties could include: • lack of information on movements • it goes against freedom of choice • governments may not want to as it reduces urban resources/power base • it is not easy to distinguish between rural and urban areas • how to do it? – cost? Multiple issues governments likely need to manage: • conflict with tourism, protected areas • lack of affordable housing • poor transport/communications infrastructure e.g. expectation/need for fast broadband, mobile data networks • lack of heath/education facilities Management may be made easier by: • using planning controls/green belts, etc. • using local taxes • managing the housing market • managing transport • the location of public services, etc. • regulation/ownership of communication services • desire to reduce pressure on urban area • natural trend already Award marks based on the quality of the response using the marking levels below. **Level 4 (12–15)** Response thoroughly assesses the extent to which it is difficult for governments to manage urban to rural migration. Examples used are appropriate and integrated effectively into the response. Response is well founded in detailed knowledge and strong conceptual understanding of the topic. **Level 3 (8–11)** Response assesses the extent to which it is difficult for governments to manage urban to rural migration but may be unbalanced. Examples may lack detail or development. Response develops on a largely secure base of knowledge and understanding.	**15**

Question	Answer	Marks
5(c)	**Level 2 (4–7)** Response shows general knowledge and understanding of the extent to which it is difficult for governments to manage urban to rural migration. Response is mainly descriptive or explanatory with limited use of examples and understanding of the topic may be partial or inaccurate. Some concluding remarks. General responses without the use of example(s) will not get above the middle of Level 2 (6 marks). **Level 1 (1–3)** Response may broadly discuss how governments can manage urban to rural migration but does not address the question and does not come to a convincing conclusion. Response is descriptive, knowledge is basic and understanding is poor. **Level 0 (0)** No creditable response.	

Population/Migration/Settlement dynamics

Question	Answer	Marks
6(a)(i)	**Compare the process of 'counterurbanisation' with the process of 're-urbanisation'.** A comparison could include both similarities and differences. Two separate descriptions do not make a comparison – **max. 1 mark**. • counterurbanisation is movement from urban outwards whilst re-urbanisation is movement inwards to urban areas/of people returning to urban areas **(2)** • credit any comparison of volume, characteristics of people involved such as age or wealth, etc. **1 mark** for a simple comparison, **2 marks** for a developed comparison (such as with detail or an example) up to the maximum.	**4**
6(a)(ii)	**Suggest <u>three</u> problems for an urban area experiencing re-urbanisation.** Problems could include: • demographic e.g. changes age/sex structure, changes ethnic mix • economic e.g. rise in house prices, increased unemployment • social e.g. friction between newcomers and existing residents, gentrification, changes cultures, increased need for facilities e.g. schools, healthcare • political e.g. changes voting patterns • environmental e.g. increased pollution, more traffic **1 mark** for each problem.	**3**

Question	Answer	Marks
6(b)	**With the aid of examples, explain why urban renewal occurs.** Reasons could include: • need to upgrade an older decaying area • improve conditions for the local population • attract new investment into the area, increase tax revenue (positive multiplier) • to improve the image of an area • following major destruction e.g. earthquake, war, etc. • to attract a particular social/cultural group • to improve infrastructure e.g. roads • to attract tourists to the area/for special event e.g. facilities for major sport event Award marks based on the quality of explanation and breadth of the response using the marking levels below. **Level 3 (6–8)** Response clearly explains why urban renewal occurs. Response is well founded in detailed knowledge and strong conceptual understanding of the topic. Examples used are appropriate and integrated effectively into the response. **Level 2 (3–5)** Response explains why urban renewal occurs. Response develops on a largely secure base of knowledge and understanding. Examples may lack detail or development. **Level 1 (1–2)** Response is largely descriptive about urban renewal. Knowledge is basic and understanding may be inaccurate. Examples are in name only or lacking entirely. **Level 0 (0)** No creditable response.	**8**

Question	Answer	Marks
6(c)	**With the aid of examples, assess the extent to which it is possible for governments to manage urban areas.** Government could be national, regional or local. Degree of management often depends on the nature of the political regime. There might also be a consideration of level of economic development. Difficulties that limit government management include: • there are so many aspects that interlink e.g. transport, pollution, housing, services, industry • sheer size of urban area • costs/investment involved • large dynamic population that may not want to be managed e.g. development of squatter settlements • lack of data/expertise/technology • sustainability is key but difficult to achieve as elements may conflict e.g. environmental and economic elements • time it would take • historical aspects e.g. old housing stock/buildings, inadequate infrastructure such as sewers Higher level responses may consider the scale/size of area that can be managed in a given time frame. Award marks based on the quality of the response using the marking levels below. **Level 4 (12–15)** Response thoroughly assesses the extent to which it is possible for governments to manage urban areas. Examples used are appropriate and integrated effectively into the response. Response is well founded in detailed knowledge and strong conceptual understanding of the topic. **Level 3 (8–11)** Response assesses the extent to which it is possible for governments to manage urban areas but may be unbalanced. Examples may lack detail or development. Response develops on a largely secure base of knowledge and understanding.	**15**

Question	Answer	Marks
6(c)	**Level 2 (4–7)** Response shows general knowledge and understanding of the extent to which it is possible for governments to manage urban areas. Response is mainly descriptive or explanatory with limited use of examples and understanding of the topic may be partial or inaccurate. Some concluding remarks. General responses without the use of example(s) will not get above the middle of Level 2 (6 marks). **Level 1 (1–3)** Response may broadly discuss management of urban areas but does not address the question and does not come to a convincing conclusion. Response is descriptive, knowledge is basic and understanding is poor. **Level 0 (0)** No creditable response.	

