

GEOGRAPHY

Paper 2217/01

Paper 1 (Core)

General comments

The structure of all the questions followed the format, which has now been established, to provide a common approach for candidates whatever the topic being tested. The main characteristics of the structure of each question were:

- (a) Questions had an incline of difficulty, starting with relatively straightforward, resource-based tasks requiring brief responses, progressing to tasks requiring extended writing and the demonstration of detailed knowledge and understanding.
- (b) Two different resources were used within each question, one within **Section (a)** and the other within **Section (b)**. Some tasks involved the direct use and interpretation of the resource whilst others used it to act as a stimulus to responses, however marks were not awarded for the direct copying of sections of the resource.
- (c) The final task involved extended writing and either required or invited candidates to demonstrate case study knowledge.

It was felt that this consistent style aided candidates and as this structure will continue to be used it is worth familiarising candidates with it.

Overall, the paper produced widespread differentiation therefore and when considering the full cohort of candidates, almost the entire mark range was achieved. There were relatively few very weak candidates, however some were unable to cope with all but the most basic tasks. Most candidates did however cope well with the demands of the questions and exhibited the ability to analyse and use the resources on offer to build a sound answer. It was particularly pleasing to note the improvement in the use of the photographs where interpretation was required rather than straightforward description.

There are still many good candidates who lack the confidence to discipline themselves to concentrate on the question set. Many recognise key ideas and then write all they know about the topic without being selective and confining themselves to the main thrust of the question. Whilst some score well, they waste valuable planning and thinking time.

Whilst clearly there was immense variation in quality both between and within Centres, excellent responses were seen to all parts of all questions, including the final part of questions which required extended writing, and several Examiners commented on the improved use of case study materials this year, adding a measure of reality to the answers.

It is expected that candidates should, wherever possible, have knowledge of appropriate case studies to back up their generic knowledge and understanding. The syllabus is constructed in such a way that, wherever a Centre is located, there are likely to be opportunities to make use of local case study materials in many parts of the course and Centres are encouraged to make use of such case studies in conjunction with appropriate textbook examples, in order to provide a sound spatial balance for candidates during their course. A blend of small-scale, regional and national examples, within the context of the local area and from other countries at different levels of economic development is ideal. Candidates should be encouraged, wherever possible, to refer to real examples and include place-specific details in their answers. Where candidates develop their ideas they are likely to achieve a higher level of performance than listing simple points.

There were few rubric offences, although a number of candidates, almost exclusively weaker candidates, answered all six questions very superficially rather than selecting three. Clearly this is to their disadvantage. Time management was good for the majority of candidates, though a significant minority of candidates spent too much time on one or both of their first two questions at the expense of the third question.

Questions 1, 4, and 5 were the most popular choices.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a)(i)** A straightforward question for most candidates, however a common error was to answer “young dependents” rather than identify an actual age group as required.
- (ii)** There were many sound references to the wider or taller apex in the Netherlands [A] and the wider base or larger number of young dependents in Ethiopia [B], though some candidates answered in far too much detail, given the mark allocation and others ignored the population pyramid and outlined the reasons for the differences in life expectancy and birth rates.
- (iii)** Whilst many candidates managed to distinguish between the dependent populations of the two countries, only those who were prepared to support their answers with accurate figures (using Fig. 1) scored maximum marks. Many did attempt to use figures, however often they were grossly inaccurate.
- (iv)** This question differentiated well. Many candidates gave it careful thought and offered good answers for both LEDCs and MEDCs. They tended to concentrate on the support of relatives and involvement in the informal economy for the former and seemed to know a good deal about the welfare state and government support through pensions, care homes and free schooling in the latter. Weaker candidates merely commented on ‘support from the economically active’ or did not understand the meaning of ‘support’ for the dependent population and explained why the amount of dependents varied between LEDCs and MEDCs.
- (b)(i)** Many candidates showed a good understanding of the combined effect of low birth and death rates with sound reasoning for the longer life expectancy, whilst others just focused on birth rates. Japan was sometimes confused with China, hence there were numerous references to the One Child Policy.
- (ii)** There were many excellent attempts at this question with the emphasis on the economic stress imposed on the working population through increased taxation due to increased government expenditure on the elderly. Also there were some comments on the strategies that Japan will have to adopt to overcome a declining work force, eg imported labour, increased automation, raising the retirement age etc. Weaker answers included little development, just commenting on the ‘need for more support for the elderly’, and a few candidates wrongly interpreted the effects of an ageing population in terms of overpopulation and unemployment.
- (c)** The general effects of rapid population growth were well understood. More effective answers developed ideas rather than simply listing a series of effects, and illustrated them by reference to their chosen country. China was the most popular choice of example to illustrate points being made, though many wasted time by describing the One Child Policy in detail rather than concentrating on the reasons for the concern.

Question 2

- (a) All sub-sections were generally well answered with an acceptable definition (i) and good use of information from the table in (ii) and (iii), although weaker candidates often did little more than quote the statistics from the table in (iii). Many candidates made good use of the photograph in (iv) to suggest problems associated with traffic congestion and overcrowding in confined streets including air and noise pollution and the implications of a lack of direct sunlight. Despite the phrase 'Using evidence from Photograph A' some candidates made reference to problems faced by the residents of New York, which were highlighted by Fig. 3 but not evident from the photograph.
- (b)(i) Many candidates limited themselves to a single mark because they went no further than stating that the bikes won the challenge against potentially faster vehicles, despite the fact that a mark allocation of three should have suggested that they extend and illustrate their response by reference to information in Fig. 4.
- (ii) This was generally well answered in terms of the reasons for traffic congestion, the impacts of traffic congestion or a combination of both.
- (c) Candidates benefited from the wide choice of urban problems from which they could select and were often able to relate their choice to a local case study with good effect. Whilst some excellent responses were seen, especially in relation to solutions to traffic congestion and squatter settlements, there were also weak responses where candidates did little more than list basic ideas (eg build more roads, improve the housing, give them better water etc.). The more specific the points made the more marks candidates are likely to gain, especially if they are place specific and clearly tied in with the example quoted, rather than generic in nature. There were some unproductive answers when too much time was spent on describing the nature and impact of the problem selected rather than emphasising the solutions.

Question 3

- (a)(i) There were some precise definitions of a coral reef however many were inaccurate, describing the environment rather than the coral polyps which build the reef.
- The other three subsections were usually fairly well answered with some interpretation of the map in (ii) and (iii), although some candidates included little detail in (iii) other than making references to the areas between the tropics.
- (iv) Well-prepared candidates showed sound knowledge of the water conditions, which allow coral reefs to develop, however many, others made weak attempts or did not attempt the question.
- (b) The photographs were used well by many candidates to generate 3 marks in (i) although some restricted their answers to tourism. In (ii) many candidates did well not only to describe the damaging human activities but also went on to explain how these activities caused problems for the natural environment, though weaker candidates inevitably referred in vague terms to 'spoiling the natural environment' or 'causing pollution' without any form of elaboration.
- (c) This differentiated effectively, with well-prepared candidates describing the sequence of events that causes a headland to change through a cave, arch and stack into a stump. Weaker answers dealt only with the formation of headlands and bays and therefore gained only limited credit and some just named the features with attempting to explain their formation.

Question 4

- (a) Many candidates answered all three sub-sections well, with only the very weakest candidates unable to pick up most of the marks available. It was encouraging that many candidates knew how to use the hygrometer in (iii) and the table to determine the relative humidity, however it was evident that candidates from some Centres were unfamiliar with this.
- (b)(i) Some candidates wasted time by referring to where the rain gauge should be sited, writing little about taking the measurements as the question asked. Indeed many answers tended to be rather brief and restricted to pouring the water into a measuring cylinder. More should have been made of the regularity of the readings and the importance of reading at eye level from the bottom of the meniscus.
- (ii) There were many detailed answers, which related the features of a Stevenson Screen to their importance in establishing an accurate reading. Some candidates also included references to why the roof of a building would not be as good a location.
- (iii) The ideal locations for both the wind vane and the rain gauge were well understood, most candidates were able to explain why these locations permitted accurate measurements and even weaker candidates were able to make some pertinent points by using Fig. 7.
- (c) Flooding and drought were the most popular selections and candidates were able to relate their choice to a case study. There were some excellent case studies, and it is encouraging to see the use of recent newsworthy examples such as Hurricane Katrina. Fortunately, not too many wrote about the 2004 tsunami, although this was an error made by a significant minority of candidates. While many wasted time by writing at length on the causes of the hazard, the problems created for people were well understood with extended writing on each idea offered. The human impacts were often well developed, less so the economic and social impacts

Question 5

- (a) A good start for many candidates who used the table well and understood the benefits that tourism brings to a LEDC, though the brevity of answers sometimes restricted marks in **Sections (ii) and (iii)**. Most candidates correctly referred to the fact that the locals ended up with jobs which were lower paid than people from abroad, however many overlooked the fact that far more jobs were created for the local people. Candidates need to be aware that the use of words like 'facilities' or 'services' is insufficient alone to gain marks.
- (b)(i) Three acceptable changes were identified from the diagrams by most candidates.
- (ii) Answers were very wide-ranging, often making effective use of Fig. 9, and included the economic concerns, social problems encountered by the local people and concerns relating to possible environmental degradation. This was a very productive sub-section for most candidates.
- (iii) The issue of sustainability is not well known and only rarely did candidates answer this question well in relation to the measures, which would allow tourism to develop and continue with no adverse effects. Most answers concentrated on ways in which tourist areas could become "bigger and better" without any consideration for the knock-on effects, however the small number of excellent answers seen made impressive references to ecotourism, National Parks, limiting development in various ways and using local labour.
- (c) Once again there were some good choices of case studies, many of which were local to candidates who were able to give precise details of the physical and human attractions. Unfortunately some chose too large an area (eg a whole country such as France), and not all candidates focused on the physical and human attractions of their chosen area, merely repeating earlier references to the benefits of tourism to the area.

Question 6

- (a) This was a rewarding part for many well-prepared candidates, who analysed the map correctly and also had the factual information and understanding to answer sub-sections (ii) and (iv) successfully. However, for weaker candidates marks were often lost in (iv) when brief, vague answers were given. In (iii) there were some irrelevant comparisons of Japan and Australia, whilst others wasted time by giving explanations for the differences, or irrelevant praise for New Zealand and/or criticism of Japan.
- (b) Whilst some candidates were clearly not familiar with the compound line graph used in Fig. 11, many others were successful in describing the changing importance of the three types of power station, although again many included irrelevant reasoning. Some correctly used statistics in their answers, though many others had obviously misunderstood the cumulative nature of the graph.
- (c) This differentiated well, there were a number of excellent answers relating to the sighting of thermal, nuclear and hydroelectric power stations, however weaker candidates answered in vague or general terms and included little valid explanation.
- (d) Excellent responses were seen to this question for a wide variety of energy forms, with good use of examples and strong links to the natural environment in terms of the impacts of both the exploitation and the use of the energy form chosen. The best answers seen tended to be on the impacts of either nuclear power or the use of fossil fuels, the latter being an ideal opportunity to display an in depth knowledge of global issues such as acid rain and global warming, in addition to local environmental issues. Some candidates wrote at length about impacts on people rather than the natural environment, this was particularly so for many candidates who used Chernobyl as a case study of the impacts of nuclear power generation.

GEOGRAPHY

Paper 2217/02

Paper 2

General comments

Section A

Candidates were entered for this examination from 44 different Centres across 23 countries. Their answers varied greatly between Centres, with the biggest differences being shown on the map questions. Some Centres had a majority of candidates who had a good understanding of how to interpret detailed maps but others had candidates who were clearly unfamiliar with such maps, although they may have given sound answers to the remaining questions. Overall Question 1 parts (c) and (d), Question 2, Question 5 parts (a), (b) and (c), Question 6 parts (a) and (b) and Question 7(a) were well answered by a majority of candidates. Question 3 brought a wide range of responses, with all candidates scoring some marks but only candidates with a sound understanding achieving full marks. The remaining questions were clearly found to be challenging by some, but others were able to demonstrate high levels of skills and understanding on these questions.

Extracts from a variety of candidates' scripts are quoted below *in italics* to illustrate the sort of responses that were awarded full marks. They are not intended in any way to be perfect or model answers. They may contain inaccuracies and are quoted as written by candidates including grammatical errors.

Question 1.

This question brought a wide variety of responses. Part (a) was a straightforward opening question, which was answered well by many but in some Centres candidates showed little understanding of how to work out a grid reference. A tolerance of a tenth was given for the 6 figure reference but some candidates were well outside this tolerance.

Part (b) enabled most candidates to earn some marks. There was plenty of scope for earning the 6 marks allocated. Weaknesses which limited candidates' scores included: inaccurate distances despite the one kilometre grid squares which enabled quick calculation of distances; not referring to any features which could be seen en route; confusion between east and west and lack of precision in the instructions given.

'From School travel towards the west on Bois Cheri Road until you meet a junction in Le Bocage after tea plantations. Then travel by the Montagne Ory Road which goes through an area of scrub and even slopes. Then you reach the M1 motorway which is approximately 8.5 km to the market. From the point where the Montagne Road and motorway meet travel northwest on the motorway. While travelling you pass by two steep hills and a reservoir before the first embankment. Then we pass through a sugar plantation until we meet another embankment. There onwards the road leads straight northwards passing Pailles, a bridge over the St Louis Stream till Plaine Louzen. There onwards travel North East on Southern Entrance road until we meet the market'.

Part (c) was answered well by most candidates. There was plenty of information on the map that could be used and it was good that many candidates understood the significance of the contours.

'As you walk you cross River Moka and then pass through a large sugar plantation estate. Next there is a steep slope to be climbed until we reach Guiby Peak which is an area of cliffs. Then again we climb over on a steep slope passing a forest. Then descend downwards on almost a cliff like steep slope. Next we come across Snail Peak which is an extremely steep area with a lot of cliffs. Thereafter you descend in a slightly sloped area in Pouce valley passing a pond and passing Pouce stream twice until you reach the School.

Part (d). This question was straightforward for most candidates who knew how to use 4 figure references. 'Residential' was not awarded a mark for the first square as the map does not show this but most candidates identified several other land uses and so scored 2 marks. 'Built-up' and 'urban' were accepted.

Part (e) was the weakest part of Question 1 for many candidates. Although many mentioned the closeness to the harbour, far fewer mentioned the deep water channel, the flat land for a large building, the access to the motorway via a direct road link and the fact that there were many areas of sugar plantations nearby. The power station was awarded a mark but 'access to roads' was not accepted as inevitably all factories need some sort of road access. 'Marshland' was not accepted unless the candidate added that this provided flat land once it had been reclaimed.

Question 2

This question was well answered by many candidates. Most showed a good understanding of population issues. They correctly calculated the percentages of young people for part (a). The common weakness with part (b) lay in reference to death rates. The pyramids show percentages in each age group, but some candidates jumped to references to high or low death rates, which cannot readily be assumed, from the pyramids. References to high (country A) or low (country B) proportions or numbers of elderly people scored marks. References to birth rates were accepted as this is self evident from the pyramids.

The following answer scored both marks for giving reasons for pyramid B being the LEDC.

1 *'Wide base of pyramid indicates high birth rate. Most LEDCs have high birth rate.'*

2 *'Narrow top of the pyramid indicates that only few people can live over the age of 60.'*

Candidates had more difficulty with part (c) but generally showed a sound understanding of population dynamics.

Pyramid for country A

'A current low birth rate means that the country would have a low working population in the next 20 years. Therefore middle part of pyramid will be more narrow. As the life expectancy is high more people will live over 60, therefore the pyramid will have a wide top.'

Pyramid for country B

'A current high birth rate means more people of working age and the middle part of the pyramid will be more wider. The base of the pyramid may become wider as more people will reach child-bearing age.'

Question 3

Candidates responded well to these images. Candidates could score up to half marks for describing each of the four chosen images and making simple statements about why they were positive or negative. To score higher marks, candidate had to explain why the images were positive or negative. Many candidates did this, showing good understanding the development issues represented.

Image 1 *'This image shows School children, this image is drawn to show that if the country develops in a positive way, more children will be provided education. This means if more children are educated, the literacy rate will increase. They will get better jobs, there will be possibility of low birth rate.'*

Question 4

Most candidates correctly inserted 'vegetation' or 'plants' in the first space and 'eroded' or 'minerals leached' in the second. However, fewer identified that the third box required reference to the soil being protected. 'Bind together', 'stabilise', 'strengthen' and 'hold' were accepted as valid answers. The last space required candidates to say how the diguer would help. Candidates who referred in some way to the diguer preventing plants from being washed away or channelling water for the plants scored a mark here. 'Avoiding wind erosion' was also accepted. The simple 'protect' on its own was not accepted, however.

Question 5

The first parts of this question were very well answered with most candidates picking out 'sugar cane' for (a) and 'soybeans' for (b) with 'soybeans, bananas, rubber and cocoa' being correct for (c).

Answers to part (d) showed that most candidates understood the benefits of cash crops, coupled with some knowledge, albeit very simplistic in some cases, of the disadvantages. Better candidates wrote about

fluctuating demand and its effect on prices, along with vulnerability to weather and diseases. Many recognised that it could reduce the amount of land available for growing food crops for local people. References to 'all the crop being exported leaving none for the locals' were too simplistic to be awarded a mark.

Advantages

'More foreign exchange can be earned so income would be generated. This could be used for further development of farming methods or could be used for other developments.'

Disadvantages

*'Deforestation will take place in order to clear land for cash crops
Cash crops depend on physical conditions. Therefore if there is a natural disaster, the cash crop industry will come to a standstill.'*

Question 6

Parts (a) and (b) were easy questions that were well answered by most candidates. Most scored at least one mark for part (c) but many did not go beyond the scenario set out in the diagram. This question required candidates to use their knowledge and understanding to go beyond the specifics of the diagram.

'The remaining soil would be exhausted, as a result crop yield would fall even further, more soil would be lost. More trees would be cut down to provide ash for fertilisation, as a result more soil erosion. Deforestation, soil erosion and desertification will take place as a result.'

Question 7

Answers to these questions were very much influenced by candidates' own experiences. As many answered that the pattern was 'nucleated' as wrote 'dispersed'. Both were accepted as valid answers provided candidates showed that they understood the meaning of these terms. A few candidates wrote about its being a 'linear' settlement, which was much harder to justify. Many wrote about the houses being well spaced and not in any obvious order or planned layout. They then went on to write about lack of crowding, scope for growing food and lack of air pollution. The disadvantages were described as the difficulty of providing services to a spread-out community and the lack of surfaced roads. Candidates who described a nucleated pattern could score marks here, provided their responses were based on the pattern shown in the photograph.