



Pearson

Examiners' Report Principal Examiner Feedback

January 2018

Pearson Edexcel International Advanced Level
In Geography (WGE04_01)
Unit 4: Researching Geography

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Overview

With a small entry it is inappropriate and misleading to draw too many general conclusions about student performance. However, the following comments are intended to help centres prepare their candidates for future examinations by drawing attention to the most troubling characteristics of the January entry.

Option 1

The pre-release materials gave centres a clear steer as to the broad focus of this question but obviously they did not identify the evaluative question. As is often the case, too many of the reports offered a good deal of largely well-researched case-study information but failed to use that information to address the contention in the title. Thus, very few acknowledged that very large tectonic events would overwhelm even the most prepared of populations.

The word in the question that was often ignored was 'impact'. It would have helped if the impact had been explicitly broken down into components; in other words deconstructed into the human and environmental costs that are the results of any disaster, natural or otherwise.

Option 2

There were no answers to this question

Option 3

This was the most popular option and some of the responses were thoughtful and well-constructed. As with the other options the pre-release steers set clear parameters to the range of research required but obviously did not identify the proposition in the exam question. As with other questions and as in the past on the legacy specification the ability to deploy well-researched case-study material to answer the question was the key. Introductions occasionally defined key terms but gave no hint as to the focus of the question that was being asked so, for example, they did not address what might constitute a negative impact.

It would also have helped students construct their arguments if they had addressed the distinction between 'cultures' and 'cultural diversity'. This was often ignored.

Almost all candidates realised that 'always' was an extreme and difficult position to define but the clarity of on-going evaluation and the conclusion was not always clearly expressed.

A number of answers were not presented in report form but as essays that lacked referencing, a justification of the chosen methodology or coherent introductions and conclusions. This obviously impacted on their mark.

Option 4

Once again the pre-release steers set clear parameters to the range of research required but obviously did not identify the proposition in the exam question. As with other questions and as in the past on the legacy specification the ability to deploy well-researched case-study material to answer the question was the key.

The first step in that is deconstructing the question which had a well-flagged relationship but also a restriction with the use of the phrase 'increasingly difficult'. It was this latter element that was ignored by some and only fleetingly addressed by others.

As with option 4 a number of answers were not presented in report form but as essays that lacked referencing, a justification of the chosen methodology or coherent introductions and conclusions. Again this obviously impacted on their mark.

Summary

There were many very competent reports that only needed a little more focus on the question asked to improve their mark. However, at the other end of the mark range there were a number of very brief 'essays' that failed to conform to the demands of this report-based examination.