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Examiners' Report
Principal Examiner Feedback

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Pearson Edexcel International Advanced Level
In Geography (WGE01/01)
Paper 1: Global Challenges

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Introduction

Most candidates managed to answer all questions on the examination paper, however there were more blank unanswered questions than in previous series. As might be expected given the current global situation there was variation in the quality of answers. However some candidates had been prepared exceptionally for this exam series.

Global Challenges contains a choice of World at Risk or Going Global longer essay questions. More candidates opted to answer the World at Risk section this exam series although the disparity in numbers between the optional sections was less than in previous series.

Centres may wish to consider some general points going forward:

- Mark schemes refer to 'evidence': this can come in the form of examples, case studies, data, facts, detailed reference to places, concepts and geographical theory.
- Many questions use the command word 'assess' this is defined in the Specification on page 77. This requires higher-order thinking skills that involve candidates looking at several sides of an argument or question, weighing up issues, considering which factors / explanations are the most important and making supported judgements. Failure to demonstrate these cognitive skills limits available credit.
- Candidates are expected to have studied a range of hydrometeorological hazards including understanding their distribution and causes.
- Candidates used the key terms of developing and emerging countries intermittently. Centres should work on clarifying the differences between these key terms using named examples to support.

Question 1ai

This question asked candidates to describe the distribution of avalanche hazard risk shown on Figure 1. Most candidates scored full marks here by identifying that the risk was either in Northern or Southern Europe, with candidates going onto naming explicit countries or mountainous regions.

Question 1aii

Candidates were asked to explain two factors that may trigger avalanches in the areas shown in Figure 1. On the whole candidates were able to score at least two of the four marks by identifying a trigger as outlined in the question, for example; increased temperature or earthquakes. However, some candidates did not score marks as they described the areas where avalanches would be found, for example on steep slopes or in cold regions. This did not answer the question which needed the candidates to articulate a change/trigger that had taken place to initiate the avalanche.

Question 1b

This question asked candidates to explain one way that the magnitude of a hazard event can be measured. Most candidates focused on measuring the magnitude of tectonic hazards via the Moment Magnitude Scale or Richter scale which was appropriate. However, candidates needed to be able to explain how these measure the magnitude of a hazard event i.e. the release of energy from an earthquake. On the whole, candidates were able to score two of the three marks available, but struggled to extent their response by identifying that the MMS and Richter scales were logarithmic scales for example. A few candidates had misconceptions that the MMS and Richter scales had a limit i.e. stating 1-9 for example. Some candidates failed to score marks here as they described the use of the hazard-risk equation or Mercalli scale which does not measure magnitude.

Question 1c

There was variability in terms of quality of response for this question. The best responses were able to articulate clear reasons why hydro-meteorological hazards had different economic and social impacts. The best candidates did this through contrasting levels of development or via contrasting different hydro-met hazards. These candidates could exemplify through this named examples to shown the contrast. The weakest responses tended to be generic, providing basic ideas e.g. lack of preparedness without explaining why. These answers tended to remain within level 1. Most candidates were able to score level 2 for this question, showing the majority of candidates had an understanding of social and economic impacts of hydro-met hazards. A limited number of candidates drifted off into tectonic hazards which was not the question focus.

Question 2ai

For this question candidates struggled to accurately state the number of typical years in a sunspot cycle with answers ranging from 500 years to 3 years.

Question 2aii

Candidates on a whole performed well with candidate able to describe the trend in sunspot activity. Where candidates used data from the graph to describe the trends, they tended to gain full marks. However, some candidates did not refer to the graph explicitly i.e. just stating that sunspot activity declined, without linking it to a timeframe on the graph. This meant these candidates did not score marks.

Question 2aiii

Candidates were asked to suggest one impact of sunspot numbers on Earth's climate. There was no expectation that students would have studied this particular time period, however candidates should have been able to apply their understanding of sunspots to suggest an impact. Most candidates were able to identify that the reduced sunspot activity would result in colder temperatures and scored one mark here. However, for the second mark they needed to either explain why i.e. reduced solar radiation or extend their answer by explaining an impact i.e. reduced farming activity.

Question 2b

This question required candidates to explain why evidence used to reconstruct past climate records may be unreliable. Candidates struggled if they chose to focus on only one type of climate record as they were unable to extend this for the full marks available. The best candidates chose a range of records explaining why they may be reliable, for example the proxy nature of paintings or the contamination of tree ring data.

Question 2c

The majority of candidates had a clear understanding climate could change to impact farming in the future. These candidates were able to score in level 2 by explaining consequences such as increased pests, forced migration and the need to switch to GM crops. The best candidates showed clear understanding of climate belts through their geographical location and explicitly explained how different climate belts shifting, for example mid-latitudes could be affected differently than the sub-Saharan belt, and consequently have varying impacts on the farmers located there.

Question 3ai

This question asked candidates to identify the correct approximate percentage of countries that had formally approved the AfCTA. On the whole candidates were able to use the resource effectively to approximate the

answer but some candidates used valuable time attempting to work out the exact percentage rather than eliminating the incorrect answers.

Question 3a ii

Candidates were asked to explain one reason why Africa nations may benefit from joining free trade blocs such as AfCFTA. There was no expectation that candidates would have studied this particular trade bloc, however candidates should have studied others such as NAFTA and the EU, and as a result could apply their understanding to this unfamiliar context. Most candidates scored well by identifying the removal of barriers such as tariffs or taxes which would facilitate trade within Africa. However, some candidates struggled to apply their knowledge to this unfamiliar context and therefore didn't attempt to answer the question.

Question 3b

This question asked candidates to explain how the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and International Monetary Fund (IMF) had each promoted globalisation. The majority of candidates had a clear understanding of the role of the WTO and could explain how they set free trade rules or encouraged the formation of trade blocs. However, often candidates missed the second mark by failing to link this to the promotion of globalisation.

Candidates' knowledge of the IMF was less secure with candidates having misconceptions of the IMF granting aid. The best candidates were clear in the IMF's role in stabilising currencies and encouraging markets towards privatisation.

Question 3c

Candidates performed well on this question and were able to gain at least one mark by identifying a way in which the globalisation level of a country could be measured. Most candidates achieved this by stating either the KOF index or AT Kearney Index, which scored that one mark. For the second extension mark, candidates needed to explain how that measured globalisation levels, this was less secure for many candidates. A small minority incorrectly identified that a country's level of GDP could be used.

Question 3d

Candidates had a good understanding of the benefits of outsourcing production to emerging countries. Some candidates interpreted the question as solely focused on the benefits and costs for TNCs and as such they were limited to level 2 as this failed to focus on the implications for emerging countries. The best candidates applied their benefits and costs through explicit examples and used supporting evidence to exemplify their response, this is typical of level 3.

Question 4ai

There was a considerable amount of misconception surrounding the use of the term emerging and developing. Many candidates selected developing when the highest polluting countries were countries such as China.

Question 4aii

The majority of candidates were able to identify that China had high levels of pollution-related deaths due to air pollution caused by manufacturing. However a key misconception from a number of candidates was this was due to high levels of carbon dioxide, rather than nitrous oxide and particular matter being released. Candidate also should be aware that they cannot gain credit by mirroring of ideas across the two sections of the question, this meant that candidates needed to identify a different reason why USA pollution-related deaths were lower. Some candidates appeared to believe that the USA did not produce any goods at all which is incorrect or stated it was because of them signing climate agreements.

Question 4b

This question was successful for the majority of candidates as this is a well-taught area of the specification. The best candidates explained a range of benefits such as filling skills gap, counter-balancing ageing populations and boosting tax contributions. However, a small minority of candidates discussed benefits such as remittances between sent home, which are benefits for the source country and not the host country which the question was focused upon.

Question 4c

The question asked candidates to explain why managing international migration is a challenge for most countries. The best responses were able to discuss the issue of the lack of borders in Europe, as well as migrants fleeing conflict zones leading to issues in managing the numbers of migrants for countries receiving them. A small number of candidates discussed the issues of rural-urban migration which was not the focus on the question. Candidates also need to be mindful of their approach to questions of this nature, as level 1 candidates tended to have very narrow views of migrants and the challenges that they may bring of countries they reside in.

Question 5a

Candidates were required to suggest reason for the trends in both flood and drought disasters as shown in the figure. Candidates were able to describe the trends well identifying the differencing nature of floods and droughts. Level 1 candidates however simply described the patterns shown without suggesting any reasons why the disasters patterns might have changed.

Level 2 candidates were able to suggest plausible reasons such as global warming or increased urbanisation levels for the changing patterns of floods

for example. Candidates were able to move up the marks in this level through their clear explanation and use of key terms such as infiltration and sea-surface temperatures.

At level 3, candidate responses were balanced resulting in a range of reasons for both flood and drought trends. Crucially they also linked the patterns to explicit geographical locations and used supporting evidence to explain these.

Question 5b

There was considerable variability in the level of responses that candidates wrote in response to this question. At the top end, candidates could clearly explain why global warming threatened developing countries and explored a range of implications for these locations. Key to their success was that they focused on the 'more than others' part of the question and therefore considered the threat of global warming to a range of location, assessing which was therefore likely to be most threatened. The use of named examples and supporting evidence was again key to accessing level 4.

At the bottom end candidates struggled to do more than explain how global warming might cause problems in the future. Level 2 responses tended to recognise that developing countries were most threatened by global warming but didn't balance their response, either by considering some benefits that countries may gain from global warming or by considering that other countries i.e. the developed countries were still likely to be impacted but that they had a greater capacity to cope.

Question 6a

Candidates were asked to suggest reasons for the contrasting urbanisation trends shown in the figure. On the whole candidates struggled with this question because they did not have a clear understanding of what the term urbanisation meant. Candidates often began their response by incorrectly identifying that urbanisation meant the movement of people from rural to urban areas (rural-urban migration) or the location of industry into rural areas. This therefore impeded candidates' ability to suggest plausible reasons for the trends shown.

Level 2 candidates covered a range of reasons for trends for at least two of the areas shown on the resource. Often these tended to focus on the global shift in Asia and the slower rate of urbanisation in Africa due to a high proportion of people still employed in the primary sector. Candidates at this level often struggled to suggest reasons for the trends in Europe.

Level 3 candidates had a clear understanding of urbanisation and accurately identified the growing trend of counter-urbanisation in Europe countries and suggested a range of reasons for this.

Question 6b

Candidates performed well on this question by demonstrating clear knowledge and understanding of how globalisation had benefitted emerging countries. Weaker candidates tended to list the benefits that globalisation had brought to emerging countries, whilst stronger candidates fully explained these benefits.

At level 2 candidates explored a range of benefits to emerging countries, but this was often unbalanced with candidates not considering the negatives that globalisation had also brought to these locations.

At level 3, candidate responses were balanced and at the top end the picked up on the 'more than others' part of the question enabling them to explore how developed countries had also benefitted from globalisation.

To move to level 4 candidates had a wide range of supporting evidence and named examples to provide weight to their responses. This led to a balanced response and a substantiated conclusion which convinced the reader to their perspective.

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