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Pearson Edexcel International Advanced Level
In Geography (4GE1)
Paper 01R: Global Challenges

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Introduction

This was the first assessment of the new specification for International GCSE (9-1) Geography, Paper 1 – Physical Geography component and it was pleasing to see a good standard of responses from candidates. This paper requires the candidates to complete two 25-mark questions from three in section A and one 20-mark question from three in section B. The exam includes multiple-choice questions, short open, open response, calculations and 8-mark extended writing questions. The exam command words, which are used in this paper, are defined on page 47 of the specification. The questions are mapped to one or more of the Assessment Objectives (AOs).

The approach to individual items is considered in this report, including examples of good practice related to the 4-mark open response and 8-mark extended writing questions. These questions provided the greatest range of responses from candidates, with the best answers addressing the command word directly, whilst providing the necessary level of description, explanation and/or exemplification.

Section A,

In this section, candidates are required to answer two out of the three questions available with the content focussed on river environments, coastal environments and hazardous environments. Each question follows the same structure culminating in an 8-mark, extended writing question that targets AO3 and AO4.

The new International GCSE (9-1) Geography specification has been designed for all levels of ability, rather than being differentiated into higher and foundation tiers as a result has been a greater range of marks across the papers generally.

Section A

Q1(b)(ii)

This item required candidates to identify one store in the hydrological cycle, candidates responded well to this question with many candidates gaining one mark.

Q1(b)(iii)

Most candidates scored at least one mark on this item, as there were able to identify a method of water transfer in the hydrological cycle. Where candidates failed to achieve both marks it was because they had not developed the answer fully, for example candidates often identified Evaporation as a method of water transfer but then didn't outline how this happens i.e. heat energy causing water to change to steam.

Q1(c)

Most candidates scored one or two marks on this item. Candidates were able to identify features from the resource successfully, however weaker candidates were not able to develop their responses to access the additional marks. Where candidates did access full marks, it demonstrated a good understanding of the effect of farming on river ecosystems and eutrophication.

Q1(d)

Candidates responses were weak on this question overall. Some candidates were able to identify a simple link between higher intensity or higher amount of rainfall and the river regime. Only limited amounts of candidates were able to develop their answers to identify how this affected lag time. Very few candidates approached this question from the idea of the effect of limited rainfall on river regime.

Q1(e)

The majority of candidates were able to identify the feature correctly. However, some identified floodplain which was incorrect in this case. The feature identified lies within the white box area.

Q1(f)

Most candidates scored at least two marks on this question. There was generally a good understanding of some elements of erosion, deposition and the idea of part of the meander being "cut off" to form an Ox bow lake. Candidates failed to score the higher marks on this item because the sequence of formation was sometimes confused or key elements missed. For example, some candidates talked about erosion and deposition but failed to discuss the idea meanders narrowing at the neck or the river taking the shortest route.

Q1(g)

In this 8-mark extended writing question there were few candidates who did not attempt to provide an answer. There was a good range of responses broadly in line with expectations. Candidates who produced a level 3 response were able to combine both resources and link the flood risk from fig.1c with the factors influencing flood risk in fig. 1d. Some candidates produced strong level 2 answers that were focussed on fig. 1d primarily.

Q2(b)(ii)

Candidates provided a good range of responses to this item. Common responses focused on mechanical, biological and to a lesser extent chemical weathering. Some candidates also gained credit through identification of specific types of weathering such as freeze thaw and acid rain.

Q2(b)(iii)

The majority of candidates had a good understanding that the prevailing wind controlled the direction of longshore drift. A few students confused

that it is the swash and not the backwash that hits the beach at the angle, while the backwash recedes at a right angle to the beach. Overall, the responses to this item were of a high standard.

Q2(c)

Most candidates were able to access at least two marks on this item through simple ideas.

However, many explained how hard and soft rocks affected the shape of the coastline within the one point, thus missing the second two marks. Better responses gave examples of hard and soft rocks. In some cases, candidates had not read the question properly resulting in them talking about human impact on the shape of the coastline.

Q2(d)

Most answers were generally well done, however many were not developed sufficiently to secure the full three marks. The question asked for '**one physical factor**', however some candidates included human factors or described three different factors. Candidates who scored full marks on this question either focused on the idea of temperature or developed the idea that shallow waters allowed for greater sunlight, leading to greater photosynthesis.

Q2(e)

The majority of candidates were able to identify the feature correctly. However, some identified the feature as a stump, which was incorrect in this case.

Q2(f)

A significant number of candidates confused the formation of caves, arches, stacks and stump sequence with cliff formation, and so received few marks. A few described the formation of a headland. Overall most candidates scored at least two marks on this item. The better answers included sequential connectives, e.g., '**so**', '**therefore**', '**leading to**' to explain the formation in order.

Q2(g)(ii)

In this 8-mark extended writing question, few candidates did not attempt to provide an answer. There was a good range of responses broadly in line with expectations. Level one responses tended to be quite descriptive in nature with very limited reference to either resource. Some candidates produced strong level 2 answers that were focussed primarily on fig.

Q2(d)

Candidates who produced a level 3 response were able to combine ideas from both resources and link the beach management technique to why it might have been used for example, e.g. groynes are good because they build up the beach, which is able to attract tourists, thus maintaining the local economy.

Q3(b)(ii)

Candidates provided a good range of responses to this item with most gaining the mark available. Where candidates did not score, it was mainly because they identified an impact for example building collapse.

Q3(b)(iii)

Candidates generally answered this question well, clearly identifying a physical impact and including an expansion to gain full 2 marks. The most common answers referred to Lava flows, Ash fall and Pyroclastic flows and damaged infrastructure/buildings. Where candidates only scored one mark it was because they did not adequately explain how the physical impact came about.

Q3(c)

There were very mixed responses to this question. Some very strong answers were seen clearly mirroring the mark scheme. The most popular response referred to the sea surface temperatures being important, particular temperatures stated, along with reference to warmer temperature near the equator/ in the tropics. Many failed to expand the response indicating temperature was important in order to help with evaporation, creation of low pressure and powering the storm development. Not many candidates referred to strong winds and the Coriolis Effect although where they did the responses showed a good understanding.

Q3(d)

The answers to this question were very mixed. It was clear that most candidates had studied and learnt about 'Hotspots' and therefore they referred to Plumes of magma and it breaking through to create a volcano. However, there were many candidate's whose response indicated that they had not studied about Hotspots or they were simply getting confused with multiple hazard zones. Expansion in order to achieve the full three marks was often a challenge for the candidates.

Q3(f)

This was a very well answered question with many candidates achieving full marks. The most popular answers included all the aspects referred to on the mark scheme along with some very nice references to geothermal energy and some examples such as Iceland and the tourism industry. Some candidates resorted to individual points rather than develop different aspects but this still enabled them to gain access to all four marks.

Q3(g)

This question seemed to pose a challenge for many candidates. There was a clear lack of use of both figure 3b and 3d in responses seen. Many candidates simply focussed on the use of figure 3d by lifting large chunks from the resource and stating them in their answers, with little in the way of expansion to link it to the Parks model shown in figure 3c. Candidates need

to develop a deeper understanding of the “Analyse” command word to enable them to access the higher levels on the mark scheme. Some strong candidates were clearly able to use both figure 3c and 3d and work through the stages step by step in a logical manner in order to clearly analyse the use of GIS shown in figure 3d and link it , with examples to illustrate from their own studies, to the parks model shown in figure 3c.

Section B – Fieldwork Component

Questions 4,5,6

In this section, candidates were required to answer one out of the three questions available and as such, the questions mirrored each other.

Q4(a)(i)-(ii)

This item required the candidate to identify a risk with that students could face whilst carrying out fieldwork. For the second mark, candidates were asked to identify one way that risk could be managed. Most candidates were successful in accessing both marks for part i and part ii. A common risk that identified was slipping over and the candidates suggested this could be managed by wearing suitable footwear.

Q4(a)(iii)

This item was answer quite well with many candidates gaining two marks. Where candidates scored only one mark it was due to them not writing the final answer to one decimal place or because they had not shown the relevant working out as detailed in the question.

This item required candidates to complete the bar chart.

In the majority of cases, candidates were able to plot both bars successfully.

Q4(a)(iv)

This item required candidates to complete the bar chart. In the majority of cases, candidates were able to plot both bars successfully.

Q4(a)(v)

For this item candidates were asked to suggest a reason for the anomalous result i.e. the fact that the cork float took far longer to travel between A and B for sample 5. Most candidates scored 1 mark here through identifying that something could have stopped the cork flowing down the river, however in some cases they did not gain access to the second mark because the candidate did not outline what effect the cork getting caught would have on the time taken to get to point B. Other ideas included human error in timing or the distance measured between point A and B.

Q4(b)

This question was generally answered poorly by many candidates. It was regularly noted that candidates did not understand the terms quantitative and qualitative and therefore they referred to sampling strategies such as systematic, stratified and random, with no particular description of the fieldwork techniques. Some candidates even resorted to an evaluation of techniques of data collection. Many responses were seen referring to measuring velocity whereas the question was looking for descriptions of **'additional fieldwork techniques'** to the velocity methods already indicated in the earlier parts of the question.

Where there was a clear understanding of the question, the candidates regularly referred to measurements of width, depth and cross-sectional area. Also linking this to the calculation of discharge within the channel.

Q5(b)

Many students were unable to clearly differentiate between quantitative and qualitative fieldwork techniques. Qualitative data collection methods were far more unfamiliar to students. The better quantitative answers referred to measuring the gradient of the beach profile or conducting wave counts at different sites, while the best qualitative answers referred to environmental quality surveys or drawing fieldwork sketches to compare the features of each site, which is subjective.

Q6(b)

The majority of students knew the difference between Quantitative and qualitative field work and able to give an example.

Q4(c)

The responses to this question were very much description in nature rather than flowing into a more evaluative style of writing. Many candidates gave an account of their own fieldwork and the methods used without the expansion into more detailed evaluation. This prevented many getting past a low level 2 response.

The strongest responses were very methodical and showed a clear ability to look at methods of data collection, human error and equipment choice, accuracy and reliability, and repeatability. They also were able to refer to data processing and accuracy of conclusion reached.

Q5(c)

The best answers referred to fieldwork that they had experienced first-hand. The command term 'evaluate' was often ignored and many candidates failed to explain the pros and cons of their data collection methods. Very few made suggestions to improve the weaknesses found to help achieve more reliable results.

Q6(c)

Many candidates did not read the question.

Based on their performance on this paper, candidates in future series should be encouraged to:

Ensure that candidates are familiar with the new command words used in this specification, for example, the difference in demands of **'analyse'** and **'evaluate'**.

Candidates should also spend time reviewing the process of geographical enquiry to ensure that the stages are understood, this will help candidates prepare for the level response question in section B.

Alternatively, 'evaluate' requires candidates to measure the value or success of something and ultimately, provide a substantiated judgement/conclusion.

Centres should spend time reviewing the examples in this report, and other support materials via the qualification page on the Pearson website. This will help candidates become more familiar with the expectations of the command words, and how they should target the different AOs.

In questions where there is reference to a resource, it is important to ensure that evidence from the resource is used to answer the question, as these items are targeting AO3.

In questions where they are asked to develop a single reason, it is important to ensure that the appropriate number of links in the explanatory chain are developed. The number of marks should be used as a guide.

These questions usually have the command word, **'suggest'** or **'explain'**, but may differ in depth depending on the expectation of the question. For example, a 4-mark, **'explain one reason why...'** question requires greater depth than a 4-mark, **'explain two reasons for...'** question.

There will always be a few questions that require candidates to perform a calculation. Therefore, it is essential that candidates have a calculator with them. It is also important to read the question carefully. For example, if the question states, 'answer to one decimal place', this must be done to access full marks.

In the new specification, there is a greater emphasis on AO3 (application of knowledge and understanding), rather than merely recalling facts and figures. Therefore, it is important that candidates can apply place-specific information from their case studies to unfamiliar contexts, or when asked to refer to a named country. The absence of this is likely to limit attainment of higher marks.

Use the Sample Assessment Materials (SAMs) and specimen papers to help familiarise candidates with the structure of the paper; this will hopefully avoid situations where the rubric has not been followed.