

Examiners' Report
Principal Examiner Feedback

June 2011

International GCSE
Pakistan Studies (4PA0_02)
Land, People & Resources

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Introduction:

Question 1, composing of the map and general geographical questions, was compulsory, and most candidates were able to select, as required, three other questions, from a choice of seven. In a small number of cases, four of all the additional questions were attempted.

The majority of candidates appeared to be well prepared for this paper, and were able to apply their knowledge to answer the specific points required by the paper. In a relatively small number of cases, fundamental examination skills were not applied. For example, candidates wrote about the key topic which seemed to feature in a question, with little regard for the precise instructions, and there was some evidence that questions had not been fully read.

The knowledge displayed by many candidates was often good but there was a mark variation in the application of this knowledge between and within questions, as discussed below.

Question 1

The expectation is that most candidates will perform well with this question and will be able to show a sound general knowledge of the geography of Pakistan. Surprisingly, the majority of candidates were able to gain between seven to nine marks, with only a few achieving all twelve marks. The most common errors included incorrect identification of the mineral in 1avi, naming China as Pakistan's most important trading partner, 1biii, and being unable to state the meaning of MNC, 1bvi.

Question 2

This was a popular question and produced some confident answers, particularly in part 2c, where reference was appropriately made to a wide range of problems resulting from climatic hazards, usually flooding caused by either snow melt or intensive rainfall. A small number of candidates misread the question and discussed tectonic hazards.

Section 2b was also in general competently answered, although some candidates did not compare both temperature and rainfall for the two locations.

Section 2aii showed that some candidates were confused about the causes of the major rainfall events outlined in question 2ai. Part of a competent answer given by one candidate stated 'The monsoon season, which tends to be the hot season in Pakistan, has monsoon winds originating in the Bay of Bengal and then crossing Bangladesh and India to reach Pakistan where the northern part of the country receives heavy rainfall'. The convection currents associated with the heat result in convection currents bringing rainfall to the upper Punjab and other northern areas of Pakistan.'

Question 3

Unfortunately, a number of candidates did not appreciate the importance of life expectancy as population measure 3ai, and therefore were unable to make a secure start to this popular question. Section 3aii tended to be much better answered with the majority of candidates obtaining 2 marks, although few were able to describe the use of horizontal bars in a population pyramid. Question 3b produced some extensive answers which tended to concentrate on a number of reasons for a high birth rate in Pakistan, as in this extract; 'There is a strong desire for a son, as he will be the main source of income, and look after his parents in their old age.' Most candidates failed to address the declining death rate or the term 'rapid', and consequently did not achieve full marks.

There were some excellent explanations of the uneven population distribution in Pakistan, as illustrated by this focused extract; ‘...this is because Baluchistan is the largest province of Pakistan, and has a rugged landscape. Also basic necessities like water and electricity are not sufficiently available, so many people do not choose to live there, as farming is not easy either.’

Question 4

The concept of urbanisation was almost universally poorly understood and very few candidates obtained full marks for sections 4ai and 4aii.

4b was, in general, extremely well answered with candidates supply detailed accounts of both the push and pull factors influencing rural to urban migration. Candidates were also confident in describing and explaining the major problems facing Pakistan’s cities, although relatively few attempted to suggest which problems could be considered the major ones. A few candidates described the problems facing Pakistan rather than focusing on the question and consequently did not achieve high marks for this section. It is important that candidates are taught examination skills so that they learn to answer all aspects of the question.

Question 5

The majority of candidates obtained 2 marks for section 5ai, with few knowing a possible ‘store’ for the systems diagram. Both the terms subsistence and commercial farming were well understood in 5aii, although some candidates failed to describe the differences between the two farming types. There were some excellent answers to 5b which included detailed descriptions of the main wheat growing reasons and a range of reasons such as soil types, climate, available labour, demand and the availability of irrigation.

In 5c there was a tendency for the candidates to simply agree with the statement and to then describe the importance of soil to agriculture. Some

candidates were able to recognise a number of threats to soil fertility, over-cultivation, increased salinity, and erosion but very few reached the highest marks available for this section by suggesting methods to mitigate these threats.

Question 6

Almost all candidates achieved high marks for sections 6a and 6b of this popular question. However, section 6c was frequently misunderstood, with many candidates focusing their answers on the reasons for the unequal distribution of energy throughout the country. It was relatively rare to see an answer that linked the unequal distribution of energy and development, as attempted by this candidate; 'The areas which do not have electricity cannot develop. They cannot use modern technology such as computers and televisions and so their standard of living will not improve nor will the outputs from agriculture. Without electricity, modern methods of irrigation are not possible, which decreases crop yields.'

It is very important that candidates read and answer the question set.

Question 7

This was again a popular question and tended to result in some of the strongest answers seen. The concept of trade balance, 7ai was well understood and a number of candidates were able to give three separate ways of potentially improving Pakistan's trading position. Section 7c enabled candidates to show considerable knowledge and understanding of the problems of developing tourism within Pakistan and many candidates were able to develop their answers beyond the threat of terrorism. For example, 'There is lack of security, due to terrorism, and visitors are not attracted due to the lack of advertising. The Tourist Development Co-operation does not upgrade its website regularly so people are not aware of the attractions in Pakistan.'

Question 8

This was one of the least popular questions and was not, in general, well answered. In section 8b many candidates identified forestry, soil or water, when non-renewable fossil fuels might have been a better option. Most candidates described rather than explained the differences in regional development across the country, again illustrating the importance of ensuring that candidates are taught essential examination skills.

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