

Markscheme

May 2026

Geography

Higher level and Standard level

Paper 2

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Paper 2 Section C markbands

Marks	Level descriptor		
	AO1: Knowledge and understanding of specified content AO2: Application and analysis of knowledge and understanding	AO3: Synthesis and evaluation	AO4: Selection, use and application of a variety of appropriate skills and techniques
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.		
1–2	The response is too brief, lists unconnected information, is not focused on the question and lacks structure.		
	- The response is very brief or descriptive, listing a series of unconnected comments or largely irrelevant information. The knowledge and understanding presented is very general with large gaps or errors in interpretation. Examples or case studies are not included or only listed. - There is no evidence of analysis. - Terminology is missing, not defined, irrelevant or used incorrectly.	No evidence of evaluation or conclusion is expected at this level.	- Information presented is not grouped logically (in paragraphs or sections). - Maps, graphs or diagrams are not included, are irrelevant or difficult to decipher (only if appropriate to the question).
3–4	The response is too general, lacks detail, is not focused on the question and is largely unstructured.		
	- The response is very general. The knowledge and understanding presented outlines examples, statistics, and facts that are both relevant and irrelevant. Links to the question are listed. - The argument or analysis presented is not relevant to the question. - Basic terminology is defined and used but with errors in understanding or used inconsistently.	- If appropriate to the question, the conclusion is irrelevant. - There is no evidence of critical evaluation of evidence (examples, statistics and case studies).	- Most of the information is not grouped logically (in paragraphs or sections). - Maps, graphs or diagrams included lack detail, are incorrectly or only partially interpreted without explicit connections to the question (only if appropriate to the question).

5–6	The response partially addresses the question, but with a narrow argument, an unsubstantiated conclusion, and limited evaluation. • The response describes relevant supporting evidence (information, examples, case studies et cetera), outlining appropriate link(s) to the question. • The argument or analysis partially addresses the question or elaborates one point repeatedly. • Relevant terminology is defined and used with only minor errors in understanding or is used inconsistently.
7–8	The response addresses the whole question, the analysis is evaluated and the conclusion is relevant but lacks balance. • The response describes relevant supporting evidence correctly (information, examples and case studies) that covers all the main points of the question, describing appropriate links to the question. • The argument or analysis is clear and relevant to the question but one-sided or unbalanced. • Complex terminology is defined and used correctly but not consistently.
9–10	The response is in-depth and question-specific (topic and command term); analysis and conclusion are justified through well-developed evaluation of evidence and perspectives. • The response explains correct and relevant examples, statistics and details that are integrated in the response, explaining the appropriate link to the question. • The argument or analysis is balanced, presenting evidence that is discussed, explaining complexity, exceptions and comparisons. • Complex and relevant terminology is used correctly throughout the response.

Section A

1. Changing population

- (a) (i) State which country had the largest number of internally displaced people in 2022. [1]
Democratic Republic of the Congo
- (ii) Estimate the percentage of the total number of internal displacements in Ethiopia caused by disaster. [1]
33-37%

- (b) Explain **one** way in which an impact of climate change may lead to internal displacement of people. [2]

Award [1] for a specific impact of climate change and [1] for how it leads to displacement of population.

For example: Increase in temperature to high levels [1] may be intolerable to human health [1].

Other possibilities may include:

- Increased rainfall leads to widespread flooding [1] which destroys homes/leads to food shortages/gives health and sanitation hazards [1].
- Rising sea levels/coastal erosion [1] render settlement uninhabitable [1].
- Droughts/decreased rainfall/changing rainfall patterns [1] cause crop failures/lack of clean drinking water [1].
- Wildfires [1] destroy homes/direct threats to life/cause economic disruption [1].
- Salinization of farmland [1] causes decrease in agricultural production [1].
- Loss of livelihoods [e.g. fishing/herding/agriculture] due to rising temperature/droughts etc. [1] incomes collapse in areas reliant on resource based industries [1]
- Damage to housing and infrastructure from extreme weather [1] people relocate to where services still function [1]
 - Climate change may amplify conflict [1] violence/insecurity causes migration [1]

- (c) Explain **one** way in which the population structure of a destination city or country could be affected by migration. [2]

Award [1] for the way in which population structure is affected and [1] for development associated with the characteristics of the groups involved in migration.

Population structure refers to age, gender, dependency ratio, ethnicity/culture and BR/DR. Answers must refer to these aspects for [1] mark.

For example: The number of men in the population may increase [1] as in many societies men are more mobile and it is easier for them to migrate [1].

Other possibilities may include:

- The number of working age may increase [1] as old and young left behind/15-64 age range are biggest migrant group [1].
- The number of women and children may increase [1] as men remain fighting/in the militias in the area of origin [1].

- The number of children/birth rate may increase [1] as many migrants will be in a fertile age group [1].
- Lowers median age [1] migrants normally 18-35 [1]
- Reduces dependency ratios [1] migrants are working age [1]
- Changes cultural/ethnic structure/ increase diversity [1] inflows have distinctive ethnic/linguistic/religious character

- (d) (i) Explain **one** challenge faced by women who are internally displaced. [2]

Award [1] for the challenge to females and [1] for development/explanation of how it forms a challenge.

For example, vulnerability to violence/sexual assault/trafficking [1] as they are in an insecure environment [1].

Other possibilities may include:

- Limited access to female specific healthcare/healthcare services such as contraception [1] no hospital or clinics nearby [1]
- Economic hardship as many displaced females take survival/entry-level jobs e.g. work in the informal economy/low wage jobs [1] cannot continue with former means of livelihood [1]
- Loss of social status [1] traditional gender roles may be disrupted, impacting women's decision-making power and social standing [1]
- Education disruption [1] adolescent girls pulled from school for domestic duties [1]
- Exclusion/discrimination [1] women barred from decision making in aid and camp governance/access to services/employment [1]
- Women look after the vulnerable [1] gives physical stress and psychological/anxiety issues [1]
- Lack of access to female/menstrual hygiene/'toilet security' (concerns about privacy/sanitation/pregnancy specific needs) [1] leads to infections/long term complications/anxiety [1]

- (ii) Explain **one different** challenge faced by children who are internally displaced. [2]

Award [1] for the challenge and [1] for development.

For example: Disruption of education [1], unable to continue school/missing school records/curriculum mismatches [1].

Other possibilities may include:

- Separation from family [1] parents or family left behind/ children left unguided [1].
- Risk of trafficking [1] unaccompanied children are vulnerable to exploitation or forced recruitment to militia [1].
- Limited access to healthcare and nutrition [1] rely on aid or charity and limited availability/hunger and malnutrition [1].
- Psychological trauma/mental health conditions/toxic stress [1] severe psychological consequences for children, including anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) [1]
- Gender based violence [1] girls have heightened risk of sexual assault/exploitation [1]
- Risk of disease increases [1] children's immune systems are still developing/overcrowded camps [1]

- Loss of stability and routine as friendship/family/community disrupted **[1]** emotional development and security hindered **[1]**
- Limited access to child specific healthcare e.g. vaccination/immunization, nutrition and growth, development **[1]** can result in delayed development, impaired growth, ongoing medical problems **[1]**

2. Global climate — vulnerability and resilience

- (a) Describe the trend in carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions between 1950 and 2022 in upper–middle-income countries. [2]

Award [1] for identifying the overall trend of increase over time and [1] for identifying the fluctuation/periods of decline / changes in rate of change.

NB. Quantification is required for full marks.

- (b) Explain **two** different ways in which changes in income have led to increased greenhouse gas emissions. [2+2]

Award [1] for a valid reason associated with change in income and [1] for development that explains how this has resulted in an increase in greenhouse gas emissions.

Possibilities must be linked to increased greenhouse gas emissions.

For example: As income increases, so does consumer demand for goods and services [1] resulting in higher use of fossil fuels to produce / transport goods [1].

Other possibilities may include:

- Increased production/consumption of meat [1] leads to increase methane emissions from cows, sheep, and goats [1].
- increased production and/or consumption of food [1] production of carbon dioxide from deforestation/ farming practices/use of fertilizers [1]
- Clearing of forest / change in land use for new infrastructure [1] releases carbon dioxide (CO₂) stored in trees\soil into the atmosphere [1].
- Increased use of transportation / travel / private cars [1] leads to increased emission of CO₂ and other greenhouses gases through exhaust [1].
- Higher incomes lead to increase in use of energy-consuming devices / air conditioning / heating [1] which increases energy emissions from power production [1].
- Higher incomes lead to increased amount of consumer waste [1], which produces methane from landfill [1].
- Diet changes to increase consumption of meat and dairy products [1] livestock farming produces more methane [1]
- Housing expansion/larger homes/urban development [1] construction uses cement/concrete/steel whose production uses a lot of fossil energy [1]
- Increase in capital investment in industry [1] leads to an increase in fossil fuels used in transport and production [1]

- (b) (i) Explain **one** impact of climate change on human health. [2]

Award [1] for a valid impact of climate change and [1] for associated link to human health.

For example: Climate change leads to prolonged higher temperatures / heat waves [1], which can cause heat stress / respiratory diseases in humans/ weaken immune systems [1].

Other possibilities may include:

- Changes in rainfall patterns / flooding [1] increase the risk of waterborne diseases like cholera / food insecurity [1].
- Air pollution from increased wildfires/dust from droughts [1] worsens respiratory conditions/asthma [1].
- Increased occurrence of extreme weather episodes [1] leads to increased death and injury//destroys health infrastructure such as hospitals [1].
- Food insecurity and malnutrition [1] reduced crop yields from drought leads to shortage/higher prices [1]
- Water shortages and unsafe water [1] leads to dehydration/poor hygiene [1]
- Mental health issues from anxiety/depression [1] fear of loss of homes/repeated disasters/displacement [1]
- Melting of permafrost releases viruses [1] reactivates ancient/dormant pathogens e.g. anthrax and “zombie” viruses [1]
- Increase temperature/rainfall expand the zones of vector borne diseases [1] new breeding habitats/lengthened breeding seasons exposes populations to malaria/dengue/Lyme disease [1]

- (ii) Explain **one different** impact of climate change on ocean transport routes. [2]

Award [1] for a valid different impact of climate change and [1] for associated link to ocean transport routes

For example: The melting of Arctic Sea ice [1] opens new shipping routes /shortens transport routes/ icebergs may restrict use of certain routes [1].

Other possibilities may include:

- The frequency/intensity of hurricanes/cyclones/typhoons/changing wind patterns [1] leads to change in ocean transport routes to avoid areas of danger/increases fuel costs[1].
- Drought has reduced water levels in canals, e.g. Panama [1], forcing different routes to be used by larger ships/weight restrictions/transit delays [1]
- Rising sea levels affects ports/port infrastructure [1] flooding of facilities/damage from storm surges/cost of damages [1]

3. Global resource consumption and security

- (a) Outline what is meant by *ecological footprint*. [2]

The theoretical measurement of the amount of land and water a population require to produce the resources it consumes [1] and to absorb its waste [1] under prevailing technology.

- (b) Explain **two** ways in which poverty reduction may lead to an increase in the availability of water. [2+2]

In each case, award [1] for a valid for how poverty reduction increases water availability and [1] for an associated link to explanation/exemplification.

For example: There is improved access to funding for investments in water-related infrastructure/equipment/treatment plants [1], ensuring a reliable and clean water supply is available to all [1].

Other possibilities may include:

- More funding to maintain existing water facilities [1] for the continuous supply of water [1].
- More funding is available to develop smart infrastructure / efficient technology [1] that consumes less water [1].
- Individuals and households can now afford to pay for the use of water-related services [1] such as potable water connecting pipelines/ water storage facilities for clean water sources [1].
- Individuals can now adopt improved technologies [1] water conservation systems /rainwater harvesting to ensure water is more readily available in water-scarce areas [1].
- Communities can now have the skills / appropriate conservation technologies [1] to maintain local water resources sources / manage community-led water systems [1].
- Governments will have more funding available to import water [1] from countries to supplement existing water resources [1].
- Improved sanitation and water treatment [1] increases the amount of safe and usable water [1]
- Improved management of water e.g. monitoring systems/repair leaks [1] reduces waste and increases the effective availability of water [1]
- Increases education and awareness about water issues [1] improves water conservation/sustainable farming practices which protects water resources [1]
- Poverty reduction may increase the mobility of individuals and families [1] enabling migration to areas with more secure and reliable water supplies [1]

- (c) Explain **two** factors that improve energy security for **one named** country. [2+2]

*For a named country, award [1] for a valid factor that **improves/increases** energy security and [1] for an associated link to explanation/exemplification of how the factor improves energy security and is relevant to the named country [1].*

NB. Both factors should relate to the same country. If no identified country or the factors are valid but not applicable to the stated country or two different countries are stated max [2]

For example: In Nigeria (named country), promoting the use of energy-efficient appliances [1] will decrease the overall energy consumption/ reduce the load on the national energy grid [1].

Other possible factors may include:

- Communities can invest in renewable energy sources such as large solar farms / small-scale wind turbines **[1]** that will increase local energy production/ reduce reliance on national power grids **[1]**.
- Government investment/support e.g. extension of grid/promote the use of smart meters / devices that monitor energy consumption/smart grids/storage **[1]** so that households have access to/use energy more efficiently **[1]**.
- The government encouraging behavioral/lifestyle changes that support energy conservation practices **[1]**, such as turning off lights when not in use **[1]**.
- Civil society organizations promoting energy conservation advocacy campaigns **[1]** to raise awareness about energy security issues in the country **[1]**.
- Diversification of energy sources **[1]** avoids reliance on a single supplier or fuel source **[1]**
- Decentralize production to local grids/rooftop solar **[1]** ensures if one node is disrupted the broader system remains functional **[1]**
- International cooperation and trade agreements **[1]** cooperate on generating and supplying energy **[1]**
- Exploration and discovery of new reserves **[1]** reduces reliance on imports/lowers exposure to global price volatility/stabilizes prices **[1]**
- International aid e.g. International Energy Agency **[1]** provides financing and technological transfer **[1]**
- Energy imports e.g. UK LNG imports from Norway/USA **[1]** prevent domestic shortfalls, diversifies energy mix, relieves supply in extreme weather **[1]**

Section B

4. (a) (i) State the age group **and** weight status for females that lose 9.5 healthy years to obesity. [1]

Age: 30–39

Weight status: Severely overweight

NB. Both age and weight status needed.

- (ii) State the range of healthy life expectancy for males in the most deprived areas. [1]

0.6 (56.7–57.3/57.3–56.7%)

- (b) Explain **one** reason why healthy life expectancy may decrease. [2]

Award [1] for a valid reason for the decrease and [1] for relevant explanation of how the reason causes decreasing healthy life expectancy.

For example, the COVID-19 pandemic [1] led to disruptions in healthcare services / delayed diagnoses, treatments, and preventive care [1]

Other possibilities may include:

- Increasing prevalence of chronic diseases due to lifestyle changes [1] obesity, sedentary lifestyles, and unhealthy diets contribute to the rise of chronic diseases like diabetes and heart disease [1]
- Ageing populations [1] in older populations the incidence of chronic diseases increases [1].
- Changes in socioeconomic characteristics, such as income or access to healthcare [1], may cause levels of poverty to increase, which leads to poorer diet / decrease in investment to healthcare facilities means diseases not treated [1]
- Increase in environmental pollution/changing climate [1] exposure to air, water, and soil pollution can lead to chronic diseases and reduce healthy life expectancy/impact of consequences of climate change [1]
- Increase in violence or conflict [1] More fatalities due to war/destruction of health facilities in conflicts [1]
- Increase in mental health issues [1] increases cardiovascular disease, accelerates ageing/higher suicide rates [1]
- Reductions in government funding [1] health infrastructure/prevention and cure does not address medical problems [1]

- (c) To what extent does the evidence in the infographic support the view that health expenditure is the main factor influencing healthy life expectancy? [6]

Award [1] for each valid point of support/non-support. Award [1] for use of evidence from the infographic that validates the point made, up to a maximum of [5]

Award the final [1] for an overall appraisal, which weighs up the infographic as a whole.

If only one side of the argument is given award a maximum of [5], Award [4] for valid points and support and [1] for an overall appraisal

Support for the view comes from the scatter graph and deprivation graph:

- Scatter graph shows a positive correlation between healthy life expectancy and the amount of health expenditure.
- The deprivation graph shows that where there is more money in an area there is higher healthy life expectancy.

- Use of data to support the link such as quantification or named countries.

Opposition to the view is found in:

- The scatter graph also shows that it is not always the case as the highest healthy life expectancy is not the highest expenditure, there is a range of life expectancies on \$2200–2300, 70 has a range of expenditures.

Evidence to oppose the view comes from examination of gender:

- The deprivation graph shows that healthy life expectancy is usually lower for males than females, in both most and least deprived areas.
- The obesity chart shows that years lost are higher for males than for females.

Evidence to oppose the view comes from examination of lifestyle:

- The bar chart shows that lifestyle alterations can reduce the risk of death by a range of percentages; physical activity is the highest, and combinations of lifestyle alterations reduce the risk of death by higher percentages.
- The obesity chart shows that being overweight decreases the healthy life expectancy by a range of years according to age group.
- The obesity chart also shows that age is a factor, older age groups have fewer healthy years to lose.

Evidence to oppose the view comes from examination of the map:

- This shows that location is a factor.
- Eastern Europe has lower healthy life expectancy / Western Europe has higher healthy life expectancy.
- NW Europe has higher healthy life expectancy than SE Europe.
- Use of data to support the link using quantification

Section C

5. “The most important benefit of the demographic dividend to a country is the increased size of the labour force.” To what extent do you agree with this statement? [10]

Marks should be allocated according to the mark bands on pages 3–4.

Possible **applied themes** (AO2) demonstrating **knowledge and understanding** (AO1):

- Responses should show an understanding of the nature of the demographic dividend. The demographic dividend refers to the economic growth potential that arises when a country experiences a favourable shift in its population’s age structure. This results in a larger proportion of the population being of working age (typically between 15 and 64 years) compared to dependents (children and the elderly). Some credit can be given to understanding of the factors that produce the demographic dividend – decline in fertility rates, lower dependency ratio, improvements in education, gender equity and good governance.
- Responses should show an understanding of how the increased size of the labour force is a benefit for a country. Credit reference to increased productivity – output of goods and services, higher GDP, increased tax revenues which allow governments to invest in infrastructure, education, etc, which further stimulates growth, larger work force allows division of labour which results in specialization, attraction of foreign investment. Credit reference to the youthful nature of the workforce and resultant innovation, entrepreneurship and wider skill set of the population. Credit reference to labour market flexibility and resilience.
- Responses should show an understanding of some other benefits of the demographic dividend:
 - Market benefits, such as expanding consumer base where growing working age population gives increased purchasing power and higher spending; increased consumer base; younger age profile diversifies consumer patterns; younger educated workforce gives innovation, which leads to new markets; younger workforce can drive technology, which leads to new markets; expansion of retail sector; increased demand for banking and financial services from increased savings and market expansion attracts FDI.
 - Improved health outcomes as population profile is younger, lower mortality rates and better quality of life as more resources are available.
 - Better education opportunities, as fewer children per family, gender equality in education.
 - Social and gender equality – women gain education and economic opportunities.
 - Demographic opportunities from lower dependency ratios as lower economic burden on working population – able to support ageing populations.
 - Demographic transition often accompanied by urbanization, which gives economies of scale, concentrates labour and capital to drive economic growth, provides improved infrastructure such as transport, utilities and health care.

When considering the extent of agreement, candidates could adopt a variety of approaches. Some may review the relative importance of different benefits. An alternative approach would look at the benefits in different places. Some answers may look at the changing importance of benefits over time.

Good answers may be **well-structured** (AO4) and may additionally offer a **critical evaluation** (AO3) which focuses on the relative benefits of the demographic dividend. Responses may address relevant key concepts in their discussion.

For 5–6 marks, expect a weakly evidenced outlining of one or more of the benefits of the demographic dividend.

For 7–8 marks, expect a well-structured account that includes:

- either a well-evidenced synthesis which considers a range of relevant ideas
- or a critical conclusion (or ongoing evaluation) informed by geographical concepts and/or perspectives.

For 9–10 marks, expect both traits.

6. “Age is the most important factor influencing vulnerability to climate change.” To what extent do you agree with this statement? **[10]**

Marks should be allocated according to the mark bands on pages 3–4.

Possible applied themes (AO2) demonstrating knowledge and understanding (AO1):

- Responses should show an understanding of how **age** influences vulnerability to climate change: **Children** are vulnerable to climate change due to their physical and developmental needs. Extreme weather events, such as heatwaves, floods, and droughts, can lead to malnutrition, waterborne diseases, and disrupted education. Children also have less capacity to adapt to changes in their environment, making them more susceptible to both immediate and long-term impacts of climate change. **Elderly people** are more likely to suffer from health problems exacerbated by climate change, such as heat stress, respiratory issues, and cardiovascular diseases. Mobility issues can make it difficult for the elderly to evacuate during extreme weather events, and social isolation can reduce their access to support networks during and after disasters. **Working-age adults** are influenced by their roles as providers and care givers. This may place economic and psychological stress on the group.
- Responses may show an understanding of how other social differences influence vulnerability to climate change:
- **Gender**
 - **Women:** Women, especially in developing countries, are often more vulnerable to climate change. In many regions, women are responsible for securing food, water, and energy for their households, tasks that become more difficult with climate change. Women have less access to resources such as land, credit, and education, which limits their ability to adapt to climate impacts. Women have fewer opportunities to participate in decision-making processes related to climate adaptation and disaster response.
 - **Men:** Men also face vulnerabilities to climate change in their roles in dangerous or high-risk occupations, such as fishing and agriculture. Economic pressures resulting from climate-related disruptions can lead to mental health issues and increased stress.
- **Education** increases awareness and understanding of climate change and educated individuals are more likely to recognize the risks associated with climate change and take proactive measures to mitigate and/or adapt to these risks. Educated individuals are likely to have higher incomes and more access to technology to help prepare and respond to climate related events such as early warning. Higher levels of education foster critical thinking to give the development and implementation of new technology. Educated populations can also advocate policies to address climate change at a variety of societal levels. Education enables engagement with community and government organizations, which allows collective action and organization in times of crisis.
- Responses may show an understanding of how other factors influence vulnerability to climate change:
- **Wealth** can be used to explain vulnerability – wealthier populations and individuals have the financial resources to invest in protective measures such as insurance, storm shutters and relocation, wealth gives access to technology to monitors risks and develop early warning, wealthy people can withstand the economic shock of climate change, poorer populations have less access to education and make less informed decisions.

- **Risk perception** allows an estimation of potential impacts of climate change and thus is linked to preventive measures, speed of action and adaptation. Risk perception is related to cultural/social norms, experience and media coverage.
- **Location** may refer to coastal regions and vulnerability to sea level rise, saltwater incursion and storm surges, mountain regions and glacial melt avalanches, semi-arid regions and drought, desertification and water scarcity. Candidates may also refer to urban and rural vulnerability and economic development.
- When considering the extent of agreement candidates could adopt a variety of approaches. Some may review the relative importance of different factors. An alternative approach would look at the factors in different places. Some answers may look at the changing importance of benefits over time. Other answers may refer to the interaction of different factors.

Good answers may be **well-structured** (AO4) and may additionally offer a **critical evaluation** (AO3) which focuses on the relative factors that influence vulnerability to climate change. Responses may address relevant key concepts in their discussion.

For 5–6 marks, expect a weakly evidenced outlining of one or more factors or ways in which age affects vulnerability to climate change.

For 7–8 marks, expect a well-structured account that includes:

- either a well-evidenced synthesis which considers a range of relevant ideas
- or a critical conclusion (or ongoing evaluation) informed by geographical concepts and/or perspectives.

For 9–10 marks, expect both traits.
