OXFORD
INTERNATIONAL
AQA EXAMINATIONS

INTERNATIONAL GCSE GEOGRAPHY

(9230/1) Paper 1: Living with the physical environment

Report on the examination

June 2022

REPORT ON EXAMINATION: INTERNATIONAL GCSE GEOGRAPHY 9230/1 PAPER 1 JUNE 2022

General

The quality of responses showed significant variation. Some centres had clearly conveyed exam technique to students more effectively than others. This is a key area to focus on. Students need to know and understand the command words, clearly addressing them as they answer the question. The resources provided are included to provide the answers in part or to help with the response and there is a need to make use of them – this did not always happen. Knowledge was indiscriminately used sometimes – so that plate tectonics appeared in coastal landforms. The application of knowledge needs to be more disciplined and target the question asked. Developing exam technique will be critical to improvement in quality in subsequent series.

QUESTION 01

Section A: The challenge of natural hazards

In 01.1, the question was largely asking 'what is an earthquake?' Often students gave causes or impacts rather than a specific feature of an earthquake – those who did tended to recognise the ground shaking; the suddenness of movement or the presence of an epicentre and/or focus. Most identified the mode in 01.2 and the mean in 01.3. Often students indicated what the mean is and how it is calculated in 01.4 rather than assessing its usefulness. This could have been positive or negative. Here, there was valid reference to the very wide range of figures linked to the average. In 01.5, some responses were generic but there had to be reference to the table (Figure 1) to effectively answer the question. The best answers noted evidence of the limited relationship from Figure 1 – selecting countries such as Nepal and Peru and then went on to offer a number of reasons why there was a limited relationship such as level of wealth, population density. In 01.6, answers needed to relate to a specific example, but a number were general. There was some confusion with a tropical storm rather than a tectonic hazard. Answers were at times almost lists of different effects with a limited understanding of the difference between primary and secondary effects. The most accomplished answers could distinguish between the initial impacts and the subsequent ones and relate specifically to an example such as Kobe, Japan, Chile or Nepal. Here accurate figures were given on numbers of deaths, injuries, homeless and impacts such as fire, tsunami and avalanches that made the link to the example precise.

Students struggled to note the correct wind direction in 01.7. Many gave the reverse of the answer – north west not seemingly knowing that wind direction is from the origin of the wind rather than the direction it is going in. Some simply and incorrectly stated up or towards the Equator. 01.8 proved equally challenging as points were stated that did not relate to the global atmospheric circulation but were linked to where there was rain or cloud or where it was hot. The diagram here provided the answers (if the global atmospheric circulation was known) and therefore indicates the need to use the resources – such as identifying where there was high or low pressure; the presence of the three cells; that winds blow from high to low pressure. All of these statements are derived from Figure 2 and reinforce the need to use the resource. The usual cause given in 01.9 related to ocean/sea temperatures of more than 27 degrees Celsius or linked to the Coriolis force – often answers were partial and disjointed rather than giving a clear, sequential developed point indicating the need to develop clearer knowledge and understanding. Some saw Figure 3a as long term and if this linked to long term planning, this was creditworthy. There was a need to refer to the figures as well as own knowledge to reach the highest level. Examples were not a specific requirement but they did provide a useful means

of indicating immediate and long term responses. Often answers were very general rather than linked to specific immediate and long term strategies. The best answers were aware of the need to provide medical care; setting up field hospitals, provide clean water etc initially and then seek to rebuild better in the future. Some sought to evaluate obeying the 'to what extent' in the question but this element was disregarded at times. Again, exam technique needs to be developed to enable students to address these questions effectively.

QUESTION 02

Section B: The living world

Some appeared to just guess the answer to 02.1 and knowledge appeared to be limited. Plants and animals was a common error; whilst some did know non-living and living and could convey scale variation in a number of ways by quoting pond to biome or noting very small to very large. Most got 02.2 correct. Distribution was not always understood in 02.3. This relates to the spread of the hot deserts and tropical rainforests not just the location. There had to be two differences established – most noted one in two separate points – indicating that tropical rainforests are found near the Equator and hot deserts along the tropics. The graph was often successfully completed in 02.4 but some perceived that the bar was temperature and the line was rainfall. This misconception sometimes impacted on 02.5 where the temperature was seen to fluctuate and the rainfall be consistent. Some students described the climate; some mistakenly noted issues with a lack of water. The better responses saw the link between the high rainfall and loss of nutrients through leaching or referred to soil erosion. Positive impacts relating to length of growing season or decomposition were rarely mentioned. The photograph in Figure 6 was often not used very much. There was a belief that hot deserts have high amounts of vegetation cover and biodiversity which is not the case. Some referred to biodiversity linked to animals which was permissible. Often, the main content of answers related to plant and animal adaptations which were certainly a part of the answer but not the whole answer. Some referred to varied reasons linked to temperature, rainfall, soil fertility. To access level 3, there had to be some specific reference to Figure 6 which give evidence of vegetation cover and number of species but effective use was rare.

QUESTION 03

Section C Physical landscapes Coastal landscapes

Often examples were given in 03.1 for which there was no credit for naming. However, there was credit for the description of a process such as freeze thaw weathering. This was the main way students gained marks. Some confused weathering with erosion. In 03.2, evidence had to be from Figure 7 but this was not always clear. To access marks, answers had to be clear – the overhanging trees at the top or those that had fallen on the beach. Mentioning trees alone was not enough for a mark. Many did get marks for noting the fallen material on the beach. In 03.3, some added up the total instead of calculating the difference. Not all gave the units when the difference was calculated and so did not gain credit. 03.4 was well done by some centres – where students clearly knew what groynes are; how they work and gave clear answers noting their effectiveness in stopping longshore drift; building up a beach and the implications of these whilst also being aware of the possible negative implications on other parts of the coast. Many recognised the headlands and bays and the beach within the bay in 03.5. Some gave vague answers; some answers did not make sense as the content did not relate to the question. Others were aware of the rock configuration, impact of hard and soft rock on erosion rates and gave detailed sequential explanation of the formation referring to processes in a coherent and complete answer.

QUESTION 04

Section D: Hot desert landscapes

This was a much less popular option than question 5. 04.1 was generally well done. To answer 04.2 successfully, there needed to be an awareness of the general trend – and then to include evidence to support or recognise an example which did not fit the trend. Not all students appeared to know the meaning of trend. Some described rather than explained in 04.3, whilst others did not understand the concept of an anomaly. The best answers referred to the graph and recognised that A did not fit the general pattern and used evidence of adjacent values to prove the point – or alternatively reflected on errors in data collection. Whilst yardangs were often recognised in Figure 12, it proved more of a challenge to explain their formation in 04.4. Some noted the vertical rock strata (although there was some confusion with horizontal which led to an explanation of zeugen and some confusion with the terms per se), the impact of wind erosion and the best showed an awareness of the role of the prevailing wind. For many, answers were partial and disjointed with limited recognition that wind was the key factor in the formation of yardangs. As has been the case earlier in the paper, the resource was often disregarded in 04.5 with minimal reference to Figure 13 and the clues it provided. A significant number of students answered this question from the point of view of tourists and what they gained from visiting or the issues they faced rather than answering the question asked with regard to the impact of tourism in hot desert areas. Better answers showed some use of the figure and noted the negative environmental and/or cultural impact and considered positives also – with some evaluation.

QUESTION 05

Section D: River landscapes

05.1 was generally accurately plotted. To answer 05.2 successfully, there needed to be an awareness of the general trend – and then to include evidence to support or recognise an example which did not fit the trend. Most noted the increase overall but far fewer accessed the second mark. Some described rather than explained in 05.3, whilst others did not understand the concept of an anomaly. The best answers referred to the graph and recognised that site 5 did not fit the general pattern and used evidence of adjacent values to prove the point – or alternatively reflected on errors in data collection. Whilst levees were often recognised in Figure 15, it proved challenging to explain their formation in 05.4. Some thought that the material was deposited as the water returned to the channel; some were distracted by the deposits on the river bed. The best responses noted that flooding occurred; the loss of energy and the subsequent deposition of the largest material first and the repetition of the sequence to build up the levees. Figure 16 was underused by many students in 05.5. Some who did use it sought to compare rural and forest rather than urban and rural and deforested and forest. Many debated the role of natural causes which was not relevant to the question. Better answers looked at one or both scenarios and realised the impact on peak discharge and lag time and related to how people increase flood risk – a few were aware of positive ways in which people could seek to reduce flood risk.

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