# GEOGRAPHY

## Overall grade boundaries

### Higher level

| **Grade**: | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Mark range**: | 0-11 | 12-24 | 25-35 | 36-47 | 48-59 | 60-71 | 72-100 |

### Standard level

| **Grade**: | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Mark range**: | 0-10 | 11-22 | 23-33 | 34-45 | 46-58 | 59-70 | 71-100 |

This session went smoothly and feedback from centres via G2 forms was very positive.

There were some very pleasing scripts written in response to paper 1, and average marks were slightly higher this session than a year ago. On paper 2,overall performance was similar to last year. The quality of standard level scripts on paper 2 suggested that this standard level cohort was a relatively weak one, compared with most recent sessions. The difficulties encountered by candidates on paper 2 are dealt with in more detail below, in the report on that paper.

It was pleasing to see that many recommendations made in previous reports are now being followed. Candidates are being better prepared for the examinations. They are more discriminating in responding to particular command terms. In addition, more candidates are providing detailed case studies, maps and diagrams in their responses.

The map work section in paper 2 was more popular this session, and marks for this question were slightly higher than previously, suggesting that centres are increasingly aware of the importance of teaching basic geographical skills.

# Higher level internal assessment

## Component grade boundaries

| **Grade**: | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Mark range**: | 0-3 | 4-7 | 8-11 | 12-15 | 16-19 | 20-23 | 24-30 |

## The range and suitability of the work submitted

It was encouraging to see the variety of work submitted and much of it made very interesting reading. Many centres are undertaking fieldwork that is well thought out, allowing candidates ample opportunities to demonstrate their skills of data collection and analysis.

Some of the very best studies made intelligent use of secondary source material to complement primary data acquired during fieldwork. However, some centres still rely too heavily on secondary material.

A few centres continue to submit studies that involve little or no genuine primary data (as defined in

 

the subject guide). These reports are invariably overly descriptive since they lack data that can be analysed in any meaningful way. Some centres also inform the reader that data has been collected but offer no evidence of how, where or why. A questionnaire for example is often an excellent method of gathering data but the content (questions) should be justified in relationship to the hypotheses cited and a recognizable sampling technique should be employed.

There was a significant minority of centres who submitted individual pieces of work well over the 2500 word limit. Moderators have no desire to penalize students and so please ensure that all the work from your centre meets the word limit in the future. It is also worth mentioning that teachers should consider the markscheme when advising students how to carry out and write up their fieldwork.

## Candidate performance against each criterion

### Criterion A

Some centres still have difficulty in guiding candidates towards appropriate hypotheses. Some are either too complex or so over-simplistic that they are not worth testing. The reduced word limit also makes it worth considering limiting the number of hypotheses tested. A maximum of two well thought-out statements that lend themselves to the collection of good-quality data and a variety of analytical techniques are most appropriate.

Stronger candidates referred with confidence to geographical theories, and were discriminating in the degree to which they relied on theory to help elucidate their findings.

Weaker candidates often failed to provide any justification for their hypotheses.

Maps showing the location where fieldwork is carried out are still very weak in many reports. There is little point in including world maps showing the location of a particular country, or national maps showing every regional division. A clear map of where the study was carried out is needed, with some good relevant locational information and, if appropriate, the exact location of any sample points. Adding carefully selected annotations to a well drawn base-map would serve as a valuable introduction to most fieldwork reports, yet very few candidates do this successfully.

### Criterion B

The basic methods used in almost all studies were well described by the majority of candidates.

However, it remains surprising how few candidates are able to demonstrate a clear understanding of the importance of appropriate sampling techniques. It is important that the choice of sampling method is justified in the fieldwork report. The term “random sample” continues to be misunderstood.

The weakest studies relied heavily on “look and see” fieldwork that does not involve any precise observations or measurements.

### Criterion C

Most of those centres that used statistical tests did so appropriately, although there continue to be exceptions where it was apparent that the candidates had no idea what tests such as nearest neighbor and Spearman’s Rank are designed to do. Always instruct students to test the significance of their results. At least one centre in this session accomplished this latter task in an excellent manner; the students had been guided appropriately and showed a high level of expertise.

The strongest candidates use statistics as only the first step in the analysis of results. Weaker candidates often use only a limited (and sometimes inappropriate) selection of graphical methods, and do not appear to understand the difference between alternative methods.

 

There was a very large variation in the quality of maps and diagrams incorporated into reports. The best maps (whether hand-drawn or computer-generated) were truly outstanding, demonstrating an admirable grasp of cartographic principles and techniques.

**Criterion D**

The quality of interpretation and analysis continues to vary greatly from centre to centre, and from candidate to candidate. The most common weakness is making the analysis a mere description of results, with no attempt to discuss the findings, or to suggest possible reasons for any connections, patterns or trends found in the data collected. It is worth restating that a good quality analysis will only appear if the hypotheses and data collection are well grounded, thorough and appropriate.

**Criterion E**

Most candidates were able to suggest some improvements, and many recognized deficiencies in their methodology. All candidates, even the weaker ones, at some centres are now scoring well on this criterion.

## Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

Candidates should be encouraged to:

(A) State their hypotheses clearly near the beginning of the report, before trying to justify their choice.
(B) Use a sketch-map (preferably not computer-derived) to show the location where the study is carried out, with annotations to justify the choice of topic and location.
(c) Ensure that methods of data collection are appropriate for the hypotheses under investigation and will generate data of a sufficient quality and quantity for subsequent analysis.
(d) Consider the possible ways in which data can be represented before they collect data in the field.
(e) Seek to analyse the data collected in some depth.

Teachers should be encouraged to:

(a) Help candidates choose an appropriate hypothesis or hypotheses.
(b) Ensure that the fieldwork study involves the collection of sufficient quantitative data.
(c) Add comments on the fieldwork reports submitted for moderation, indicating the extent to which the work matches the assessment criteria.

# Standard level internal assessment

## Component grade boundaries

| **Grade**: | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Mark range**: | 0-3 | 4-6 | 7-11 | 12-15 | 16-19 | 20-23 | 24-30 |

## The range and suitability of the work submitted

There was a wide range of topics submitted with a higher proportion of fieldwork reports. This is a good direction for the subject. Also the results of the fieldwork are of a higher standard than the ones of the research assignments where there is still a tendency to submit descriptive pieces of work.

 

# Candidate performance against each criterion

### Criterion A

In the case of criterion A there is still room for improvement as there appears to be some confusion between hypothesis, research question and aim. Also there is a clear difference between the schools where the teachers state the hypothesis/ses and all the candidates work with the same ones, and the schools where they are asked to develop their own research. In this case the quality can vary a lot between candidates. In the same respect there have been cases of fieldwork based only on research questions when the guide states hypotheses must be used. Candidates who clearly stated the hypothesis from the beginning reached a higher level of achievement.

In terms of the theoretical and locational contexts where the research was supported by geographical theory the results were a high standard. Some reports had however too many words and this caused problems for the candidates to achieve the remaining work within the word limit. In others there was no geographic theory at all, which led to poor or descriptive results. The quality of locational maps was particularly problematic as in many cases these were downloaded from the Internet. Locational maps with annotations must be provided and base maps with annotations or sketch maps are preferable.

### Criterion B

Criterion B was one of the weakest areas in the reports as there was little awareness of sampling techniques or evaluating the validity of data. This is an area where there is room for improvement, and seems to have improved very little since previous sessions. In some cases, such as in population or urban studies, it would be advisable to collect primary data and test them against secondary data or information, because although it is not compulsory in the *Geography* syllabus, it would help improve the quantity and variety of data as well as the methods themselves.

### Criterion C

In the case of Criterion C, there was a significant improvement in some cases where the candidates, maybe under pressure because of the new word limit constraints, tried to present the information in different graphical ways and were successful. There is still room for improvement in the case of labelled photographs and/or maps or where candidates present only pie or bar charts. It is also important to observe that statistics are still being omitted in most cases. This seems to be a lack of awareness about the need for them either from the candidates and/or their teachers. A variety of statistics would be, therefore a key point and teachers should ensure that the students are exposed to a wide variety of techniques in the classroom and are able to choose the most suitable ones when writing their IA.

### Criterion D

The word limit length might in some cases, have affected the quality of analysis but what makes the difference is whether candidates process the information or not. There are still many candidates who consider their analysis to be a summary of geographical background related to the topic they are researching, and make absolutely no reference to their processed information. It would also be advisable to reinforce the idea of an overall analysis and not just brief unconnected comments about each graph or illustration.

### Criterion E

Improvement is also evident in the conclusion and evaluation. Conclusions might have improved as a result of the word limit restriction as the candidates were both forced to be more concise and to avoid repeating the whole analysis. Evaluation is also improving as more and more candidates are considering the process of their research in a balanced way. However some centres produce work

 

where this is not clear or ignore this requirement. In others some candidates use it as an opportunity to criticise their teachers

## Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

Apart from the obvious recommendations implicit in the above points the following points could be taken into account by the students.

- It is advisable that the candidates have a clear aim and state this at the beginning of their report.
- The students should state their research question clearly, again near the beginning of the report, and then justify their choice.
- A good practice is to structure the report according to the assessment criteria to make sure nothing is left out. Headings and subheadings are also advised.
- Relevant information should be in the main text as well as photographs and diagrams, and not in the appendix.
- Acknowledging sources must be emphasised, especially in the research assignment.
- Basic map skills should be present in the report and not be just copy-pasted maps. The use of sketch-maps (preferably not computer-derived) to show the location where the study is carried out, with annotations to justify the choice of topic and location is also advised.
- Simply placing boxes around text or foot-noting information is not acceptable but the use of tabular presentation in the sections relating to criterion B and possibly parts of criterion A will help students to cut down the word count for these criteria.
- Ensure that methods of data collection are appropriate for the research question.

The following points should assist the teachers and candidates in preparing the reports.

- Ensure that the study involves the collection of sufficient quantitative data.
- Teachers should add comments on the reports submitted, indicating the extent to which they think the work matches the IA criteria.
- Remember that this year has been a transition year and work from centres not adhering to the new rules has been treated sympathetically. The 1500 word limit and one piece of coursework rule will be enforced more rigidly in the future.

# Higher and standard level paper one

## Component grade boundaries

| **Grade**: | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Mark range**: | 0-5 | 6-11 | 12-15 | 16-21 | 22-28 | 29-34 | 35-50 |

## General comments

A disappointing 34% of centres completed and returned the G2 feedback forms, but those that did expressed general satisfaction with the paper, with none indicating any dissatisfaction with the level of difficulty, the syllabus coverage, the clarity of wording and presentation of the paper. Individual comments expressed pleasure at the practice of giving a breakdown of marks where two command terms were used in a question and the provision of definitions where it was felt candidates could be

 

confused by a word.

The mean grade achieved was also higher than November 04 and there was a pleasing consistency in the level of performance in all three questions.

A distinct impression was gained that candidates were well prepared and that the examiner's reports from earlier sessions had been read and absorbed.

## The areas of the programme and examination that appeared difficult for the candidates

No question proved to be universally difficult and, in terms of content, there appeared to be no general areas of weakness. Sadly, however, the same could not be said for examination technique, which, despite some improvement, remains an area of concern.

The failure to read the command terms carefully remains a problem. In particular, marks were lost by candidates who only 'described' when explanation was also required (see question 1 (c)), or who gave long explanations when only descriptions were required (see questions 1 (b), and 3(a)). Another common failing was the inability to produce brief answers where only a few marks were allocated and this weakness inevitably led to a problem of time-pressure in the longer essay-type questions.

## The areas of the programme and examination in which candidates appeared well prepared

As the overall performance in this paper indicates, candidates seem generally well prepared in all areas and this is supported by the evenness of marks obtained in all three questions.

Of particular (and a pleasing) note was the increased willingness of candidates to present relevant diagrams and maps, neatly drawn and effective. However, it should also be added that some maps and diagrams served little purpose and contributed nothing to the responses.

## The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

**Question 1 - population pyramids**

This was the most popular question, attempted by 80% of the candidates. Application of the knowledge of population pyramids was good and most candidates coped happily with the shorter stimulus-based questions.

**(a) identification of pyramid A** - almost all candidates correctly identified the pyramid as typical of a MEDC and were able to justify their choice in terms of shape, low mortality and fertility rates and high life expectancy, although few related it to the demographic transition model.

**(b) identification of the sub-group pyramid** - again, this proved straightforward for the majority of candidates and it was pleasing to note how many used local examples (aboriginal peoples of Australia, Indians of Peru, poor migrants into urban centres, etc.) (The pyramids actually referred to the overall and the black populations of the USA).

**(c) differences in the 50+ year age groups** - most candidates noted the difference in numbers in the two pyramids, but few correctly quantified this as they only concentrated on the 50-59 year cohort. The stronger responses explained the differences in terms of income and access to a healthy diet and medical aid. Some provided other acceptable explanations,

 

such as that the low numbers being the result of returning temporary migrants.

**(d) advantages of migrations** - the markscheme required candidates to discuss the advantages at both the point of origin and the final destination, although some candidates also correctly commented on the advantages to the individual migrants. While there were some excellent responses, many candidates failed to do themselves justice by providing only a superficial and generalized account, lacking hard factual knowledge.

**Question 2 - development diamonds**

60% of the candidates chose this question - possibly a surprisingly high number as few of them could have seen data presented in this form before, but the level of performance was the same as that achieved in the other two questions. (As a matter of interest, the countries shown are as follows: A - Angola, B - Ethiopia, C - Kenya, D - Malawi, E - Mozambique, F - Nigeria)

**(a) least developed diamond** - the universal identification of country B as the least developed showed that the main elements of the diamond were understood.

**(b) comparative level of development of countries A and D** - very few candidates scored full marks for this question as there was a failure by most to come to a comparative conclusion. Most gave instead, simply a list of the differences in the elements of the diamonds.

**(c) strengths and weaknesses of the development diamond** - some interesting responses were made to this question, showing a willingness to think and reason. The immediate value of the visual representation of a great deal of data was recognized by most and several referred to the relevance of the elements to the HDI. Weaker candidates regarded this question as simply an opportunity to comment on the strengths and weaknesses of the different indicators of development.

**(d) consumption of resources in MEDCs** - some excellent answers were produced. These recognised that there was an over-consumption of resources in the MEDCs which has had a mainly negative impact in the LEDCs. Some good examples were used as the bases for their arguments and they were able to structure their responses to cover environmental, social and economic consequences, such as, for instance, deforestation or mining, the distortion of internal markets and the increase in rural poverty as a result of the switch to cash crops. Case studies were helpful where pertinent facts were discussed, but, as with the TNC responses, candidates often failed to focus their answers on the specific question asked.

**Question 3 - food production and availability**

60% of the candidates also chose this question and the level of achievement equated with the other two questions.

**(a) comparison of the trends in the two diagrams** - few candidates achieved full marks for this question, mainly because there was no attempt made to make an overall comparison, or because they overlooked (or possibly did not understand) that diagram A showed relative and not actual values.

**(b) changes in the LEDC values in diagram B** - all were able to identify the changes, but accounting for them proved more difficult. Only a few candidates covered all the reasons: an increase in the area under agriculture, advanced in farming techniques and the re-organization of the farming sector. The weaker candidates frequently gave long responses focused entirely on the green revolution.

 

**(c) effects of the trends in diagram B -** the most obvious conclusion to be drawn from the trends was that there should be a decrease in hunger in the LEDCs and an increase in obesity in the MEDCs. The stronger candidates were able to note this and develop it by providing some suggestions why hunger still existed and then either quantifying their responses or by using examples to illustrate the point.

**(d) global imbalance of food** – here there were some really excellent responses. Well-organised and well-reasoned answers were presented. These responses covered the environmental, economic, social and political factors responsible for the imbalance and were helped by appropriate examples. The suggested solutions were also realistic. However, at the other end of the scale, weaker responses were often characterised by long rambling discourses, unstructured and with a content that was only obliquely relevant to the question.

## Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

As already noted, the impression gained was that the candidates were better prepared for this examination. Knowledge of both facts and concepts was excellent in many centres and the candidates frequently demonstrated an ability to apply this knowledge most effectively.

Some weaknesses still remain with examination technique - mainly those already referred to: a failure to pay due attention to the command terms and to the mark allocation for the question.

One final concern is that there were several scripts with handwriting that proved to be almost illegible. Examiners should not be expected to guess what the candidate has written, as was often the case.

# Higher and standard level paper two

## Component grade boundaries

**Higher level**

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Grade**: | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| **Mark range**: | 0-10 | 11-20 | 21-29 | 30-38 | 39-46 | 47-55 | 56-80 |

**Standard level**

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Grade**: | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| **Mark range**: | 0-4 | 5-9 | 10-14 | 15-18 | 19-23 | 24-27 | 28-40 |

## The areas of the programme and examination that appeared difficult for the candidates

Candidates showed a slight preference for structured questions rather than essays, although there was no significant difference in the average mark between the two styles of question. As in previous sessions, candidates in any one centre answered questions on the same topics suggesting that there were the options selected for study but occasionally some candidates ventured into map work. For the first time there was a close match between question popularity and performance suggesting that candidates are choosing questions more carefully. Questions on arid environments, ecosystems, the region and productive activities continue to be unpopular, while lithospheric hazards and globalization still attract large numbers of candidates.

 

No candidate answered both parts (a) and (b) of the same question and only one HL candidate failed to complete all four questions in the time allowed. Nevertheless, time management at HL continues to be a problem and some scripts began with long descriptive responses and finished with a list of rushed bullet points. An examination of the scripts concerned suggested however that this was due to misapplication of the time available rather than the demands of the questions. Along with this was a gradual decline in handwriting towards the end of the exam to the point where whole lines of text were illegible and meaningless. Candidates at SL had few problems with time allocation and all candidates completed two questions.

Very few candidates were able to produce a coherent and well-structured piece of writing; many essays consisted of long stretches of unpunctuated description lacking both an introduction and a conclusion. These features would provide a logical framework to the essay and enable the examiner to follow the interpretation.

The questions with evaluations in them were a challenge to many candidates who seemed content to agree with statements not realizing that there were opposing or alternative viewpoints. Many failed to answer the question and appeared unaware of the need to define terms. This undermined the quality of responses.

## The levels of knowledge, understanding and skills demonstrated

Case studies were varied and well chosen and recall of factual information and evidence continues to improve. While some drew on their case-study knowledge, carefully applying it to the question, others presented a multi-purpose example and hoped for the best. Some excellent sketch maps accompanied many responses even when they were not a requirement of the question. Those who used the local area or an area studied on a field course as an example generally produced more detailed and relevant responses. There was a general improvement in the standard of topographic map work answers at SL.

## The strengths and weaknesses of the candidates in the treatment of individual questions

### Question 1 - Drainage basins and their management

(a) This was a relatively unpopular question but those who attempted it were well rehearsed and produced some strikingly good responses often on the Snowy Mountain or Mississippi schemes. Candidates had revised case studies well and were able to evaluate their success of these by drawing on hard evidence. However, some responses focused on flooding and failed to look at other strategies. This was not a popular choice at SL and candidates tended to focus on flood control strategies and ignored the multi-purpose aspects of the scheme that included domestic, recreational, agricultural and industrial uses of water.

(b) This was only attempted by a minority of candidates whose marks ranged widely.

(i) Only a few showed any appreciation of the processes involved in braiding and its association with stream competence, variable discharge and load. Many had a basic knowledge of meanders, but no real understanding of floodplain evolution. Diagrams of stationary meanders and ox-bow lakes were common but seldom fully explained. Throughout this question knowledge of hydrological terms was very poor; “tributaries” were used to describe the braided channel and “bends” were a common substitute for meanders. Many responses at both HL and SL incorporated material irrelevant to the question.

(ii) The focus appeared to be on negative human influences upon river flooding and very few commented on mitigation techniques. The majority of responses at SL concentrated on the negative effects of levée construction and channel straightening and ignored the effects of land use changes almost entirely.

 

**Question 2 – Coasts and their management**

(a) This was an unpopular question that was mishandled by the majority. Most candidates were unable to recognize the full scope of the question and limited their responses to a description of various types of wave action. Very few were prepared to go beyond this explanation and to show that coastal landforms may be a response to other factors such as geology, base-level change, wind action resulting in dune formation, tectonic processes and human activity. At SL the better responses recognized the interaction of a range of factors.

(b) (i) The most commonly described features were sea arch and sand spit. Some diagrams were excellent while others had no orientation and it was impossible to distinguish a plan view from a profile. The sequence of events from cave to arch was often very descriptive and made no reference to differences in resistance on the cliff face nor to the importance of wave refraction around headlands.

(ii) The majority of candidates showed a good understanding of post-glacial changes in sea level, although in some cases the terms eustatic and isostatic were not fully understood in some cases.

(iii) Only those candidates who had shown a good understanding of the previous question were able to comment upon specific features associated with submergence and emergence.

(iv) At both levels, most responses showed a good awareness of soft strategies and used relevant examples, though the weaker responses tended to simply describe these rather than evaluate their effectiveness.

**Question 3. - Arid environments and their management**

(a) Very few candidates attempted this question and responses were mostly weak. A few mentioned the Nile and the Middle East (Israel/Jordan), but the depth of knowledge of international conflict was limited and comment on national conflicts was unacceptable.

(b) (i) Most candidates recognized water and temperature as the relevant omitted factors and were able to link them to the processes.

(ii) This part was also well done, although some candidates found it difficult to separate weathering and erosion. References to "wind weathering" were common, but unacceptable.

(iii) The best responses came from schools that used examples from their own regions. References to Cairo, Lima and Las Vegas were detailed and relevant as areas of high population concentration. In other cases responses were weak and often focused on areas which were in fact sparsely populated.

**Question 4 – Lithospheric processes and hazards**

(a) This was a very popular question attempted by the majority of candidates, and at HL many candidates wrote with confidence and at great length. At the start of some essays, some time was wasted describing tectonic causes of earthquakes and volcanoes. Very few began the essay with an interpretation of "long-term" and the majority stretched the question to include short-term consequences. Case studies were factual and had been well revised, but very few candidates were able to go beyond the immediate events. Those who remembered to include the positive long-term consequences of volcanic activity improved their marks. At SL the weaker responses tended to write about the differences between short-term consequences of earthquakes for MEDCs and LEDCs, clearly resorting to a pre-prepared answer. Economic and environmental consequences were generally well understood but less so social consequences.

 

(b) (i) The majority of candidates gained both marks in this question at HL and SL

(ii) Many chose avalanches and solifluction to illustrate the influence of temperature change, but explanations were often simplistic and went no further than describing snowmelt and general slippage. Some commented upon moisture status instead of temperature. There were only one or two excellent diagrams which successfully showed the processes involved. At SL the processes involved in frost heave and its role in soil creep were well understood but explanations of solifluction in terms of seasonal temperature changes were poorly understood.

(iii) Most candidates were able to describe three types of weathering, but knowledge was poor. Links to mass movement were often missing.

(iv) Responses to this part of the question were generally poor with weathering sometimes omitted. Human actions were usually perceived as destructive with no mention of attempts to manage weathering and mass movement processes. Again at SL, a number of candidates wrongly interpreted mass movement as earthquake activity.

**Question 5 - Ecosystems and human activity.**

(a) This question was unpopular at both HL and SL and those who attempted tended to concentrate on tropical rainforest. Many were able to describe how it had been altered by human activity, but at a fairly basic level with little reference to alterations in structure and function. Some responses discussed the value of agriculture and missed the point totally. The best responses looked at fieldwork carried out in forest reserves and gave detailed examples of alteration and linked this into the need for sustainable development.

(b) There were a few responses to this question and they were generally poor.

(i) Only a few picked out the relationship between NPP and biomass and others wasted time giving explanations that were not required.

(ii) Almost all the responses selected desert, but few were able to account for the low values. Scientific knowledge was extremely weak.

(iii) Only a few looked at both positive and negative impacts of agriculture on a forest ecosystem. There were many opportunities here but few candidates performed well. Rotational bush fallowing or game ranching might have been chosen as positive examples and plantation agriculture or beef cattle ranching as negative.

**Question 6 - Climatic hazards and change.**

(a) The few who attempted this question produced some very solid answers. Knowledge of oceanic / atmospheric interactions associated with El Nino was secure and supported by good, clear diagrams. The best responses considered a wide range of consequences; positive and negative and on a range of scales. Specific knowledge of socio-economic and environmental outcomes of particular events was impressive in many cases.

(b) (i) The estimation of the date presented no difficulty to most candidates.

(ii) Diagrams were poor, and labelling often showed features such as wind speeds that were impossible to see on the satellite image.

(iii) The majority of candidates were able to describe the negative relationship between pressure and wind speed, but few could explain it.

(iv) Those candidates who had learnt their case studies carefully were well rewarded, but many responses were poorly developed and simplistic, particularly in the light of the recent extensive media coverage of hurricane events. A few answers focused on causes and consequences rather than responses.

**Question 7 - Contemporary issues in geographical regions.**

(a) No candidate attempted this question.
(b) Only one candidate answered this question, with little success.

 

**Question 8 – Settlements**

(a) This was a relatively unpopular essay and only a few showed a good understanding of urban dynamics.

(b) (i) Many were able to describe each relocation even if the process itself was not identified; terms such as counterurbanization and gentrification were not widely used. A few failed to recognize relocation as a process but regarded it as a place instead.

(ii) Generalization and guesswork prevailed and haphazardly drawn sketches of hybrid cities were common. At SL there were a few well-drawn and accurate sketch maps of land-use patterns in named cities in LEDCs that gained full marks.

(iii) Some regarded this question as an opportunity to write all they knew about traffic emissions. Accounts of air pollution were common and only a small minority made connections between transport networks and resulting land-use patterns. At SL a number of responses were able to relate patterns of urban expansion to changes in transport, mainly in cities in MEDCs but few focused clearly on the resultant land-use patterns that have emerged.

**Question 9 - Productive activities: aspects of change**

(a) This was an unpopular question where many responses were weak. Very few attempted to define either agribusiness or the industrialization of agriculture. Better responses showed a good appreciation of recent change, but the organizational side of commercial agriculture was usually neglected.

(b) This was another unpopular question yielding poor results.

(i) Many candidates successfully described the graph, recognizing the speed increase, but missing the substitution of one mode of transport by another.

(ii) There was some uncertainty about the term "friction of distance", and although there was an understanding of ICT developments, spatial connections were often missing.

(iii) Responses were often generalized and showed limited understanding of the reasons for the global shift in manufacturing. There was some reference to cheap labour, but little comment on markets, free trade zones, globalization, and legislation or tax benefits.

**Question 10 - Globalization.**

(a) This was another unpopular question, but was well managed by the few who attempted it. Some candidates had in-depth knowledge of trading blocs, trade agreements, financial flows, the influence of TNCs and ICT. Stronger candidates usually selected the question.

(b) This was the most popular question and marks were generally good.

(i) Most candidates were able to recognize a significant increase in the number of international tourists arriving in each region, but some made no comment on the global total. Very few identified the decreasing rate of growth since 2000. Weaker responses lacked any reference to the data.

(ii) Most responses focused on increasing tourist demand and improving provision as causes for the universal increase in tourist numbers. However, very few were able to identify specific regional factors. A few candidates recognized the significance of business tourists in their explanations.

(iii) There were some good, factual responses here with very few deviating on to the social and environmental consequences of tourism. It should be noted that "costs" are not exclusively monetary.

**Question 11 - Topographic mapping.**

This was a popular question with some above average marks at both HL and SL

(a) Very few errors were made in identifying the two places shown on the photograph and the map.

 

(b) The majority of HL candidates accurately gave a six-figure grid reference. This was less common at SL. No credit was given for a four-figure reference.

(c) Responses to this question were simplistic with candidates commenting on how they used contour lines to determine gradient. Specific detail, such as relief, volcanic and coastal features was often missing. The weaker responses incorporated non-physical features such as towns, airport and roads. Very few candidates quoted heights, or named landforms; an expectation at this level of geography.

(d) Descriptions were generally brief and did not involve the whole of the map. In some cases the main island was ignored. It was evident that many candidates did not understand the concept of a transport network and simply described isolated routes.

(e) Only a few candidates exploited the full breadth of this question and observations were often restricted to communication. Features such as the beaches and volcanic landscape were largely ignored, although coconut plantations were often cited as major tourist attractions. Simple descriptions of two locations were common, but very few attempted to make a direct comparison of their tourist potential. Weak map skills were easily exposed by this question; grid references, directions, distances and use of the key were necessary to gain a full appreciation of the landscape and its tourism potential. Few were able to understand the importance of the high and low water marks in terms of beach width or the relevance of offshore reefs as tourist attractions. The relative accessibility of the two locations was quite well understood.

## Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

The following points should assist teachers.

- Ensure that candidates become familiar with command terms regularly used in exam questions such as “describe”, “discuss”, “explain”, “contrast” and “evaluate”.
- Raise candidates’ awareness of the breadth of interpretation of some terms. For example, hazard impacts might have costs / benefits or be positive/negative, short-term/long-term, local/global and primary/secondary.
- Ensure that candidates start essays with an introduction that sets the scene, and finish with a meaningful conclusion that reflects on the original question. A concluding statement is especially important in a response where an element of evaluation or discussion has been included.
- Emphasize the need for candidates to present both sides of an argument when a question requires them to present a viewpoint.
- Encourage candidates to incorporate examples into their responses, even when not specifically demanded by the wording of a particular question.
- Provide candidates with the opportunity to practice responding to questions under timed conditions.
- Make candidates aware that examiners have limited time to decipher illegible scripts.
- Discourage the use of prepared responses, as rarely are these directly applicable in their entirety.
- Encourage candidates to use data provided in table or a form of graph to back up their statements.
- Practice drawing well-labelled diagrams that explain the processes involved in the formation of landscape features in detail.
- Encourage the use of correct geographical terminology

 