GEOGRAPHY

Overall grade boundaries

Higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 12	13 - 25	26 - 36	37 - 48	49 - 59	60 - 71	72 - 100

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 13	14 - 26	27 - 36	37 - 47	48 - 59	60 - 70	71 - 100

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

It was pleasing to see that many of the recommendations made in previous reports have been adopted by many centres. This familiarity with expectations means that candidates are being better prepared for the examinations. The attention paid to particular command terms is improving. In addition, examiners noted that many candidates are now providing more supporting details in case studies, maps and diagrams used in their responses.

The word limits for internal assessment continued to cause some concern for some centres at standard level. Internal assessment moderators would like to remind teachers that the mark weightings for the different IA criteria are meant to be a guide to the likely length of the respective sections of IA reports. In general, the marks awarded by teachers are getting closer each session to the marks awarded by moderators; this trend is helpful to all candidates. Teachers are reminded that they should not check candidates' internal assessment reports more than once before they are submitted.

In the examination papers, candidates' skills in time management remain a concern for examiners, as does the poor legibility of some scripts. It is recommended that teachers provide plenty of opportunity for candidates to practise writing examination answers prior to the examinations. Despite these reservations, examiners were pleased to note that there were more good quality scripts this session than last year.

After reviewing scripts and G2 forms, the senior examining team felt that this paper had been slightly more accessible to candidates than last year's paper. In light of this, most grade boundaries were adjusted slightly upwards. After this adjustment, the mean grade this session for both papers was statistically identical to that for last year. Overall, the preparation of most candidates continues to be sound.

Extended essays

The examiners for extended essays in geography urge more essay supervisors to complete the comments section on essay covers. Comments help to ensure that the criterion for holistic judgment is fairly applied. It continues to concern examiners that some essays fail to state a research question clearly anywhere in the introduction. In some cases, the only indication of the research topic is the statement (not a question) used as the essay title. The presentation of essays can be improved if relevant maps and diagrams are fully integrated into the text at the point where they are most useful. Examiners also note that, while Internet sources need to be used with caution, many original, investigative and evaluative essays are now being based on secondary data and/or textual analysis.

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

The variety of investigations was impressive and it is pleasing to see that many schools are innovative and resist repeating the previous year's work. There were some outstandingly good investigations. The topics were relevant to the syllabus, manageable in terms of time, access and safety, and yielded enough data for meaningful conclusions to be drawn. Popular topics included Coasts, Ecosystems and Settlements.

Group work was the usual practice, but occasionally candidates undertook individual investigations. On the whole these were less successful owing to the limitation in the amount of primary data that could be collected in the time allocated. It was evident that some candidates needed more guidance than they received over the formulation of hypotheses.

The word limit regulation was rigorously enforced by all moderators and it is now being respected, with very few exceptions. Few candidates are “padding” their reports with lengthy theoretical abstracts from text books, or irrelevant descriptions of historical background.

Candidate performance against each criterion

A Aims and hypotheses

Where there was more than one aim and several hypotheses, the focus of the investigation tended to be too broad. The best hypotheses consisted of one concise and testable statement, with a brief justification relating to theory. Only a minority of candidates justified the choice of survey location, mapped it and commented briefly on its suitability for hypothesis

testing. It appears that candidates still require assistance in formulating hypotheses and "setting the scene" so that the moderator can grasp the direction of the investigation.

B Methods of data collection

Attention is still needed in some centres to ensure that data collection methods will yield information of sufficient quantity (and quality) to allow for detailed analysis. The data should be "primary" and collected by the candidates themselves in the field. Secondary data can be a useful supplement, but should not dominate the research.

Many candidates recognized the need to state the sampling method, but failed to justify it. For example, it was not enough to describe the choice of survey sites along a sand-dune transect as "random". More rigorous methodology should have been adopted in some cases to standardise use of instrumental recording and handling techniques by group members. The influence of other variables should also have been taken into account. For example, the problem of time lapse in a thermal transect might have been eliminated by completing a second set of reverse readings. In some cases technical inconsistencies between group members might have been eliminated by a pilot survey.

C Data presentation and processing

Improving IT skills facilitates data handling and presentation, but the suitability of techniques was sometimes overlooked. In this session Spearman's Rank correlation was often used, but some samples were too small to be meaningful. The correlation coefficient "r", was calculated, but sometimes misunderstood and some clearly missed the point of testing for statistical significance.

A maximum of 5 marks was only achieved where data processing was effective and presentation techniques were appropriate and imaginative. Individuality was important, especially where data was collected by a group. Wherever possible, data should be displayed to show spatial patterns. Some candidates achieved this by presenting a kite diagram above a sand-dune cross-section or a series of Zingg diagrams above a beach profile. Other values such as pedestrian densities, temperatures and land / property values were very effectively displayed using isoline or choropleth maps. Downloaded Internet maps were common and very often too generalized and impersonal for the purpose of the investigation. These are useful only when additional data or information specific to the investigation is supplied. Acetate overlays are useful in this respect. The use of GIS in some centres is commendable, but not a requirement. A well-drawn map showing information that is personalised and specific to the investigation is still an effective tool that can receive much credit.

D Interpretation and analysis

There were some excellent marks gained on this criterion where each hypothesis was reviewed with close reference to the data collected and the theoretical background. Some candidates confidently rejected their hypotheses and gave realistic explanations for anomalies. High marks were more likely where the amount of attention given to the analysis matched its relatively high mark weighting. There was a tendency for some centres to over-credit criterion D when a candidate's approach was descriptive more than analytical. This

criterion should differentiate more than most and credit should be awarded for depth of understanding and a methodical approach to data interpretation.

E Conclusion and evaluation

It was unusual to find any candidate achieving more than 3 marks on this criterion due to the critical skills required and possible fieldwork fatigue at this stage. Instead of returning to the original aims and providing an overview, the conclusion was regarded by some as an opportunity to point out the flaws in the investigation and to blame inadequate equipment, lack of time and operator error. There were a few inventive suggestions for improving specific techniques of data collection, but the solution presented by many was to extend the survey time or area to a scale. Some suggestions were unrealistic and generalized.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

Candidates should

- State the hypothesis(es) clearly in one sentence followed by a brief justification.
- Draw a large-scale map of the survey area and data collection sites.
- Standardise practice in the use of instruments and the recording of data.
- Note the weighting of the assessment criteria and match their effort to each one.

Teachers should:

- Check that the fieldwork is feasible before it is undertaken.
- Check candidates' draft report **once only**
- Encourage candidates working in a group to adopt different techniques of data analysis and presentation.

Standard 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

Of the wide range of topics submitted for SL IA the most popular was Settlements followed by Population studies. Most centres produced fieldwork rather than research assignments and in general terms the former were more successful than the latter. As in previous sessions

regulations were followed and the overall quality of the investigations was good although some schools still tend to repeat the previous year's work. More well focused pieces of work with clear aims were produced and it was clear that concise but deep analysis is possible within the word limit, although there was a tendency to use hypotheses that were simplistic or too obvious. Group work was more popular than individual investigations, which were less successful because of the limitation in the amount of data that could be collected. The presentation and processing done by some centres was imaginative and of outstanding quality; several candidates made very good use of maps and pictograms. Unlike in previous sessions there were no unsuitable topics received in the samples, although some investigations for which the gathering of data is very difficult are still being produced. In this respect it should be noted that the treatment of some topics such as the dengue fever, the popularity of certain types of retail in a city or the treatment of sewage did not leave much room to develop the spatial component and made the investigations dangerously borderline with other sciences. Although the word limit had less of an impact than in previous sessions there are still candidates trying to avoid being penalized for exceeding it by using tables or by including very valuable information in the appendix. It should be emphasized that the new regulations on the word limit are rigorous and some candidates had to be penalized. As in previous sessions teachers are reminded that they should be up to date with the requirements for each session and, as frequently noted, teachers should write comments on why and how they allocated marks. Some teachers are not adding these comments for each criterion.

Candidate performance against each criterion

Criterion A: the explanation of hypotheses and use of theory now seems to be sound practice in most centres. Hypotheses should be narrow in scope and reduced in number so that they can be treated effectively within the word limit. Simplistic hypotheses however should be avoided if meaningful investigations are to be produced. It is clear that there has been a significant improvement in the use of theory, as evidenced in a high percentage of the samples. Although there has been an increase in the use of labelled maps to show location downloaded Internet maps were still common, and were too generalized and impersonal for the purposes of the investigation. These are only useful when annotations or information specific to the investigation are added. Well-drawn maps showing information that is personalised and specific to the investigation are much more effective. In most centres sources were acknowledged properly and most important, the introductions now seem to be shorter and more concise, leaving more words free for the development of the investigations.

Criterion B: there was an increase in the number of centres where candidates described and evaluated their methods and mentioned sampling techniques, which were better developed in fieldwork reports than in research assignments. Fewer candidates justified their sampling methods and there were many unjustified “random” methods used where it was obvious that strict methodology should have been adopted for better accuracy or for averaging results. A small number of centres are still struggling to produce data of quality, and it is important to note that books, newspaper articles, and other secondary sources may not contain adequate data, and that sufficient, relevant data is one of the key elements for developing an IA.

Criterion C: regarding the presentation and processing of data, it is good to note an improvement in the use of maps and an increase in the use of statistics; nevertheless a

number of centres still tend to produce very limited and repetitive types of graphs (especially pie charts and bar graphs) with little evidence of "statistical techniques". These may include basic processing to determine means, medians and other measures of central tendency or more complex statistical tests, but they should be appropriate and should allow for the data to be clearly interpreted and the hypothesis(es) tested. As usual, in this session Spearman's Rank correlation was very popular, but some samples were too small or the correlations tested were meaningless. Statistical tests should only be used where relevant and where they are understood by candidates. Some original and innovative techniques and more labelled photographs were also used in this session; but full marks are only achieved when data processing is effective and presentation techniques are appropriate and imaginative. Wherever possible, data should be displayed to show spatial patterns; this was very successful in some urban investigations but there were still many occasions in which the data were underused in terms of their spatial potential. Some candidates are not including the processed data in the body of the text, which makes the reading of it very difficult.

Criterion D: in terms of analysis, this is becoming more concise, but also more focused, with clear reference being increasingly made to the processed data and hypothesis; nevertheless, descriptive analyses with little reference to the findings, or just re-writing of pre-existing information were still common, especially in cases where the processing or the amount of data was limited.

Criterion E: conclusions were concise and in some cases, still simplistic, but it was pleasant to notice that more reference to the hypotheses was made and that in many cases anomalies were noted as well as suggestions for future investigations. This represents an improvement on previous sessions. Nevertheless some candidates still regarded the conclusion as a way of blaming others for limitations in their own work, rather than giving inventive suggestions for improving specific techniques of data collection. The only solution presented by many was to extend the survey time or the number of samples. Many suggestions were also repetitive and generalised.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

Teachers should:

- encourage students to focus on depth, and to limit the number of hypotheses as well as making sure that these are always testable
- include notes on the allocation of marks in the samples
- give further guidance to students to ensure that IAs have a clear, well labelled structure, with clear titles, a contents page, page numbering, chapter headings, and a good referencing strategy
- encourage students to place photographs, graphs, and maps appropriately within the text. All these should be numbered / labelled and referred to within the text
- encourage candidates working in a group to adopt different techniques of data analysis and presentation

- encourage students to annotate or add information to any downloaded material
- check candidates' draft reports once only so as to avoid over-guidance.

Students should be encouraged to:

- organize the report under headings and, where appropriate, match these to the assessment criteria
- reduce the number of hypotheses being investigated
- improve mapping, by including title, scale and orientation in maps, whether hand-drawn or computer-generated; link location to theory and provide maps of sample sites
- use annotated maps and photographs in the sections relating to criterion A and B to help reduce the number of words in line with the word limit, and bearing in mind the restrictions that apply to annotations
- place questionnaires within the appendix but the data presentation within the text
- use a range of presentation techniques that allow relationships to be shown
- where possible, apply statistical techniques so as to give room for a detailed analysis and conclusion
- match the amount of text for each criterion approximately to its mark weighting
- make every effort to utilise all data collected
- ensure that their report includes an **accurate** word count on the cover.

Higher and standard level paper one

Component grade boundaries

Higher level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 7	8 - 14	15 - 18	19 - 24	25 - 29	30 - 35	36 - 50

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 7	8 - 14	15 - 18	19 - 24	25 - 29	30 - 35	36 - 50

General comments

About 28% of centres completed and returned G2 feedback forms. Of the forms returned, all centres except four thought that the paper was of a similar standard to last year. There was virtually unanimous agreement that both the clarity of wording and presentation of the paper were either satisfactory or good. Two centres expressed some reservation about the syllabus coverage; their comments have been forwarded to the paper setting team for consideration when future papers are set.

Individual comments expressed pleasure at the fact that the paper "allowed students to use knowledge and case studies" and that "questions were balanced and clear".

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

In terms of content, there appeared to be no serious areas of weakness. However, responses about three population issues resulting from the national population structure in 2030 (Question 1(c)), about the advantages and disadvantages of food aid (Question 2(d)), about the concept of intervening obstacles (Question 3(c)) and the major development issues in a specific country (Question 3(d)) were often disappointing.

Time allocation and examination technique have improved but remain areas of concern. More candidates do now seem to be paying careful attention to the command term used in the question.

There were still too many overly long responses to preliminary parts of questions. Candidates should use the mark allocation more effectively as an approximate guide to the expected length of response. Most of the (few) candidates who experienced undue time-pressure had written very convoluted and verbose responses to one or more early parts of questions. Candidates should be encouraged to divide their time evenly between the two questions required.

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

Candidates seem generally well prepared in all areas and the mean marks for all three questions were very similar. Many candidates demonstrated an impressive grasp of the conceptual knowledge required for appropriate responses, and also demonstrated a clear and mature understanding of the main issues. It was pleasing to note the increased willingness of candidates to present relevant diagrams and maps, the best of which were neatly drawn and effective. Sadly, in many weaker responses, the maps and diagrams offered little information and served very little purpose.

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

Question 1 - Population structure / distribution

(a) Description of four differences between national and regional population structures

Many candidates were able to provide four distinct differences, though weaker responses often suggested differences that overlapped, or were too similar to each other to be counted as distinct ideas. Explanation was not required, given the command term employed. Note that birth rates and death rates are not, strictly speaking, elements of population structure, even if some estimation of likely rates might be possible from a population pyramid. Similarly, many candidates referred to "economically active" ages without specifying any definition. Many candidates apparently believe that everyone retires at the age of 50!

(b) Reasons for the shape of the regional population pyramid

A surprising number of candidates made no mention of birth, death or fertility rates. Some (weak) responses focused almost exclusively on migration. Most candidates offered plausible reasons for the general MEDC shape, but fewer candidates also suggested valid reasons for the specific regional shape, with its very distinctive relatively large number of people in the 80+ age group.

(c) Three population issues resulting from national population structure in 2030

Many responses were somewhat disappointing, with relatively few candidates able to specify three distinct population issues. Some responses dealt with issues in general; others were poorly organized and it was difficult to tell which three issues the candidate was writing about. Many candidates identified issues that were not population issues but economic issues.

(d) Annotated map showing population distribution in one country

A very disappointing 10% of responses failed to provide any recognizable map and hence scored no marks. At the upper end, an encouraging 18% included sound maps with good details and annotations, scoring 8 marks or more. Even when good maps had been drawn, candidates sometimes failed to provide annotations explaining the population distribution. Many candidates wrote extensive written accounts that were not directly linked in any way to the map, and which were therefore irrelevant, given the command phrase "using an annotated map *only."*

Question 2 – hunger / food aid

(a) description of pattern of causes of hunger

Comments explaining the pattern were not required by the command term. Weaker candidates were geographically imprecise in their descriptions, employing such vague words as "higher" (for north) and "left" (for west). Several candidates reversed west and east. On the other hand, many candidates accurately identified a range of countries in their responses.

(b) difference between hunger and malnutrition.

More candidates were successful in distinguishing between hunger and malnutrition than they were in explaining how hunger is measured.

(c) explanation of how two causes of hunger (economic, political, environmental) have contributed to hunger

Many responses failed to say precisely how some of the ideas expressed might result in an increased incidence of hunger. For instance, accurate statements about economic difficulties might end with a phrase such as “and the economy would suffer”, with no clear link made back to the question. Examples were very well used by stronger candidates, but often completely missing in weaker responses. The geographic vocabulary used was sometimes incorrect; there is a difference, for instance, between infertile (used by many candidates) and unproductive (which they apparently intended).

(d) advantages and disadvantages of food aid as a strategy to overcome hunger

Some candidates were unable or unwilling to name any country or region; others named regions that were inappropriately vast (Africa) or inappropriately small. The candidates’ knowledge of their chosen country or region was often extremely superficial. Of particular concern to examiners is the fact that so many candidates continue to refer to Africa as a country, and continue to make blanket and inappropriate generalizations about the entire continent, failing to recognise Africa’s enormous differences and disparities. There are many definitions of food aid, and some candidates provided a clear categorization of different kinds of food aid which then served as a natural framework for their subsequent discussion.

Question 3 – global population distribution / intervening obstacles / major development issues in a country

(a) (i) naming countries A and B

Most candidates were able to name both countries correctly, but only 50% of candidates were able to estimate the population with an acceptable level of accuracy.

(b) strengths and weaknesses of topological map of population

Two or three strengths or weaknesses were usually provided, even if they were not always developed in sufficient depth. There are no bonus marks for repeating the same basic idea several times!

(c) explanation of intervening obstacles and their effects on population movements

Weaker responses confused the concept of intervening obstacles with push/pull factors. Surprisingly few candidates recognised that intervening obstacles play a role in contributing to a distance decay pattern in migration flows as most intervening obstacles are increasingly difficult to overcome (and there are likely to be more of them) with increasing distance.

(d) the major development issues in one country

Responses to this were rather disappointing, with some candidates making completely inappropriate choices (such as Africa) as their chosen country. Weaker candidates tended to interpret this question too narrowly as being concerned only with population issues, rather than development issues of all kinds. Most responses demonstrated only a very limited knowledge of the chosen country, and the range of issues was limited in number. The strongest responses examined a wide range of appropriate and relevant issues.

Recommendations and guidance for the teaching of future candidates

Examination technique needs practice and improvement. Some candidates fail to pay sufficient attention to the precise command term/s and mark allocation for each question. Weaker candidates need more practice in using examples and case studies effectively, and in the skills involved in the interpretation of graphs, diagrams and maps. It is of particular concern that some candidates were completely unable to produce a recognisable map of any country in responding to question 1(d) or were unable to discuss the major development issues in a single country (question 3(d)) in reasonable depth.

The legibility of handwriting remains an issue. Several scripts this session were very, very difficult to read, and may have been marginally undercredited by examiners as a result. Candidates should be encouraged to avoid bullet form in responses, especially where extended writing is required. Bullet points do not provide a sound structure for an argument or opinion. They often fail to enable clear comparisons and connections to be made between parts of a response.

Where questions require a specific number of issues or reasons to be examined, it is important that candidates clearly divide their responses in such a way as to make it clear to examiners when the response related to one issue ends, and the next one begins. This can be done very simply, for example by writing, “The first issue is….. The second issue is….”

It is important that candidates know the definitions of key geographic terms and can provide these definitions and use appropriate geographic terminology in responses.

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 - 28	29 - 37	38 - 46	47 - 55	56 - 80

Standard level

Grade:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mark range:	0 - 5	6 - 10	11 - 14	15 - 18	19 - 23	24 - 27	28 - 40

The areas of the programme which proved difficult for most candidates

Structured questions continue to be more popular than essays (ratio 1:3), but their mean marks were similar. There was a close correlation between success and popularity and the most popular topics were A4 - Lithospheric hazards, B10 - Globalization, and B8 - Settlement. The least popular were B7 - Contemporary Issues in Geographical Regions, A3 - Arid environments, and B9 - Productive activities. C11 – Topographical mapping was a more popular choice than usual, but relatively low marks suggested that it was chosen as a last resort. Weak diagrammatic skills were conspicuous throughout this exam. Many diagrams were inaccurate, poorly constructed and inappropriately annotated. It appeared that little training had been given in acquiring these skills. Time management in the exam continues to be problematic for a few higher level candidates, who devote too much time to the earlier question(s) leaving insufficient time to complete a fourth question. In some cases time pressure made candidates' answers difficult to read. Time pressure did not seem to be a problem for standard level candidates though the overall level of responses at SL was lower than at HL.

The levels of knowledge, understanding and skills demonstrated

All essays and the extended responses to the structured questions discriminated particularly well. The best answers focused upon the question and demonstrated a good understanding of processes and theory. The subtlety was to select the correct case study. Case studies had been well-revised in many cases and candidates had been trained for evaluative questions. Candidates who applied their local knowledge gained through fieldwork scored particularly well.

The strengths and weaknesses of candidates in the treatments of individual questions

Essays

The most popular essays in Section A were 1(a), Rivers, 2(a) Coasts and 4(a) Volcanoes. All of these questions required depth of understanding and specialist knowledge. Very good answers followed the question, observed its slant and revisited it in the conclusion. The weakest lost sight of the question and presented a catalogue of processes, features or factors leaving the examiner to decide upon their relevance. These answers were usually descriptive and inconclusive, for example, weaker answers to 2(a) tended to simply describe the

formation of a catalogue of erosional and depositional features without considering the balance between erosion and deposition.

4(a) This question was relatively popular, but the overall performance was disappointing. Many candidates struggled to explain the relationship between the type of plate boundary and the violence of volcanic eruptions.

The most popular essay questions in section B were 8(a) Urbanization and 10(a) Tourism in LEDCs. There were some very good essays on urbanization where the full breadth of the question was addressed. These included both positive and negative consequences for the origin and destination, for the migrant, and for the nation. Although a good answer was not expected to cover all of these aspects, the weakest considered only negative consequences for the urban in-migrant.

The reasons for rapid and recent growth of tourism in LEDCs in recent years was the focus of the Globalization essay. There were some excellent answers which examined general reasons for growth in LEDCs followed by some impressive and recent case studies. Other answers missed the focus and concentrated on the problems of tourism development generally. Spain was wrongly cited by some as a LEDC and Turkey was a marginal choice. Candidates should ensure that there is no ambiguity in classifying countries according to their level of economic development.

Structured questions:

The majority of structured questions were divided into three or four parts, with the assessment objectives shifting from knowledge and understanding in earlier parts to the evaluation at the end. The last extended part of each question was more of a challenge and the prepared answer often went wide of the question.

In question 1(b)(ii) a number of candidates confused the flood recurrence interval with a chronological time scale.

In question 2(b)(iii) few candidates were able to explain adequately the reasons for the differences in cliff profiles in relation to the gradual growth of the spit and the marshes behind it.

4(b) was well done in part (i), but there was a large disparity in the marks for part (ii). Some candidates produced excellent diagrams with suitably concise annotations explaining crustal thickness in the Himalayan region. Others were poorly constructed and unrecognizible. Part (iii) was generally well done and case study knowledge was good, if somewhat dated.

Question 10 (b) iii was well done by some candidates who identified the possible benefits of globalization and explained “why” some countries could not access them. Weaker answers explained “how” some countries suffered from globalization with emphasis upon the negative impacts of TNCs. These appeared to be rehearsed answers.

Topographic mapping.

This question was unusually popular and there was a wide disparity in marks. At the top end of the mark range candidates were able to locate specific features using grid references, directions and distances and they could interpret the landscape concisely and accurately. Lower down, the skills were elementary suggesting that the option may never have been taught in class. This was particularly evident in (c) where some candidates had no idea of a "regional division" and annotations were detached from the map.

Recommendations for the teaching of future candidates

Candidates should:

- realize that illegible writing can seriously jeopardize their marks
- observe the mark weightings of questions and avoid spending too much time on those allocated low marks
- plan their extended answers briefly to make sure they cover all aspects of the question and give it the widest interpretation
- avoid writing in red pen and tabulating their answers
- not waste time writing out the question at the start of their answer.