



A-LEVEL

Geography

7037/2 Human geography
Report on the Examination

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General

Both 7037 Papers 1 and 2 are configured in similar fashion and share a range of question styles designed to very closely target specific assessment objectives. The assessment objectives were the fundamental reference point guiding examiners in their judgements of student performance on this and the other Geography papers.

Centres are encouraged to refer to the [Notes and guidance: assessment objectives](#) which elaborates upon these Assessment Objectives, how students might best address them and offers advice on how students can be prepared.

In simple terms on this paper multiple choice and short tariff questions targeted AO1 only i.e. knowledge and recall. There were two resource based questions; one type targeted AO3 (analysis of data) and one targeted AO1 and AO2 (knowledge and understanding applied in unfamiliar contexts). 9 and 20 mark questions targeted both AO1 and AO2 (with specific focus upon links within the specification which are not specified).

Students should be reminded that synopticity is tested through the application of knowledge both to unfamiliar situations and by exploring links within / across specification units. It is no longer the case that with such questions, it will be possible to see the particular reference to the specification area being targeted. The new approach to question setting means that the question itself will pull together different parts of the specification. Students will not be able to rely on recall only (AO1). Students therefore needed to 'think on their feet' in the examination and apply their knowledge and understanding to the context of the question.

In response to the 7037/2 paper students produced a very wide range of performance. The paper proved generally accessible to students across the ability range; whilst stretching and challenging the most able. Students seemed to manage their time effectively and there were only a very few who seemed to have failed to complete the paper due to time constraints.

Notwithstanding the guidance provided by AQA, some students appeared to be better prepared than others when it came to addressing AO2 and AO3. For example with reference to AO2 in several questions some students simply regurgitated specification content related to the theme of the question. This could have gained AO1 credit if it had been available but as these responses lacked application of knowledge to the focus of the question they could not gain AO2 credit. Students need to be prepared to use their knowledge and understanding of content, concepts and processes. This should then be applied in their responses to the applicable 6, 9 and 20 mark questions, rather than a narrative approach of reciting learned materials which characterised some of the more limited responses.

AO3 applied in this paper whenever a stimulus resource was used with the command *analyse*, for example 1.2, 2.2, 3.5, 4.5 and 5.5. The main issue here was that many students offered answers which better addressed AO2 requirements by applying their knowledge (offering reasons for patterns, for example) and this was fundamentally not creditworthy. The command 'analyse' in this context, required students to engage with the data and deconstruct the information. Furthermore students should be encouraged to manipulate data rather than simply describe it, as description does not constitute analysis.

Thus a significant number of students struggled with the analysis and interpretation of resource material and how they need to use them in the examination. Throughout this paper, students need

to engage with the resources and they should be encouraged to practice this throughout their A level course. Students must be made aware of the differences between AO1/AO2 and AO3 questions using a resource. On AO3 questions the command *analyse* is used and it should prompt students to use the figure. On AO1/AO2 questions it will include the phrase '*using figure X and your own knowledge ...*'.

Many students performed at a higher level on the 20 mark questions. They were often well-prepared for the demands of these questions and it was very pleasing to note the significant numbers who were able to access Level 4 by demonstrating thorough and detailed AO1 knowledge and understanding frequently showing a breadth of examples in support and making the AO2 links and so responding in detail to the nature and requirements of the question. They also had an evaluative conclusion supported by the content of the essay. All students must be prepared to deconstruct the questions, identifying the command words and the AO2 links they are required to make, thereby answering the question. For example, they should be encouraged to respond to 'to what extent' by actually stating the extent to which they agree or disagree with the statement. Many students just simply stated that '*I agree to an extent*', a rather meaningless phrase and demonstrating a lack of clear thought. Weaker responses leaned heavily upon subject knowledge and learned place-study detail, without clearly linking such material to the context of the question. These responses were predominantly descriptive and narrative, lacking critical engagement with the theme and demands of the questions.

The quality and range of response in Section B was particularly pleasing to see. Changing Places is a new concept to many teachers and students alike and it was very reassuring to see how well a large proportion of students performed, particularly in 2.4. Students showed how they frequently had a very good sense of place. They used a wide range of sources to understand their chosen place and were able to apply these successfully to answer the question. Examiners certainly felt that they learnt a lot about a wide range of places by marking this question.

In Section C, students chose one of three options from question 3 (Contemporary Urban Environments), question 4 (Population and Environment) and question 5 (Resource Security). Question 3 was the most popular option and question 5 the least popular. There was no significant variation in the performance of each question.

Question 1

1.1

Almost all students had some knowledge of the global commons and were able to illustrate it with examples. However very few were able to access maximum marks. Students needed to provide more detail in these short-answer questions. Many gave only a basic definition and examples scoring 2 marks.

1.2

For the first part of this question, students were required to calculate the IQR using the formulas given. IQR is a range and therefore should not generate a negative number. When calculated correctly the IQR was 5.7°C. However, many students wrote -5.7°C. This may have been because the numbers were all negative or it may have been due to some students taking the UQ from the LQ. In geography, it is conventional to rank the highest value (in a data set) as one. Allowance was made for students who gave a negative value. Some students simply gave the position (i.e. 3rd and

9th) and this was not credited. Far too many students were unable to do the IQR at all – geographical and maths skills need to be taught and embedded as part of the A level course.

The analysis that followed the calculation frequently was very imprecise. Far too many students use phrases such as '*it increased by around*'. They needed to be more precise and show accurate use of data. Analysis is not simple description so there was no credit for simply lifting data without any context. It was very clear when students were versed in what 'analysis' means and they were able to deal with the question effectively. These students scored well by looking at overall trends, making connections between **Figures 1a** and **1b** and manipulating data effectively in support. For example, many noted that the lowest July temperature in **Figure 1a** in 1980 also corresponded with the lowest mean annual temperature for those years at -6°C.

1.3

This proved to be an accessible question for most students. Most frequently the product used was either bananas or coffee and the vast majority did seek to offer a comparison between the resource and the product. However, it is worth noting that there is no credit in these types of questions for simply describing the resource or analysing the data in the resource in isolation. Knowledge and understanding needs to be applied to the resource. In this case the best responses looked for similarities and differences between the studied product and the flows of oil in the figure. They also considered the extent to which they were similar. The best answers reflected a detailed knowledge of the trade flows of their product, referring to specific countries and facts. Some students did not state a product and simply referred generically to a foodstuff or manufactured product. This often resulted in low marks as there was no clear pattern to compare.

1.4

Some of the responses to this question were simply outstanding. Students often had extensive knowledge of their chosen TNC (frequently Apple, Nike or Walmart) and were then able to apply this to unequal flows of money and people. The very best answers dealt with all aspects of the question, addressing the relative importance of TNCs in creating unequal flows by considering other factors such as conflict, globalisation or trading blocs. Some of the better answers also considered that TNCs could actually create more equal flows, demonstrating the breadth with which students could tackle these 20 mark questions.

Weaker responses frequently relied on knowledge and understanding of the social and environmental impacts of TNCs with very implicit links to unequal flows. This tended to reflect a lack of understanding of the demands of the question.

Question 2

2.1

The vast majority of students understood the concept of insider and outsider perspectives. However most simply stated opposite definitions, thereby repeating points already made. Better responses gained credit for using specific examples to support the points made.

2.2

This question clearly differentiated with a wide range of responses seen. Most students sought to make connections between the two figures, with the best responses looking in detail at the

variations both in terms of the strength of correlation and the spatial variation in happiness and income. It is worth noting that students are much more able to access L2 when they are well-versed in how to analyse data and it is hoped that the quality of these AO3 responses will improve over time. Far too many students simply described, in a very basic manner, for example stating that Kensington and Chelsea were very happy and they also earn lots of money. Students need to be encouraged to use specific data in support and look for the trends and connections.

2.3

This question required students to apply their knowledge of how physical geography might affect the character of a place to the novel situation shown in **Figures 4a** and **4b**. Whilst the vast majority of students were able to interpret the physical geography, they were often less confident in relating this to the 'character'. This resulted in very tentative and / or implicit references to character such as the houses being built out of slate or basic ideas about farming. The question referred to the character of a place meaning they could also bring in other places, for example a coastal town, gaining AO1 credit. Students should be encouraged to look for such subtleties in questions to allow them to fully develop their responses.

A significant number of students gained very little credit as a result of misunderstanding the question. These students compared the two figures in terms of their usefulness in representing the character of the place. This shows the importance of reading the question carefully and not assuming the question is similar to previous specimen questions.

2.4

A full spectrum of responses was seen on this question, with over half of students achieving at least Level 3. When marking the many outstanding responses it was pleasing to see the way in which students and teachers have embraced the study of their chosen places.

All students appeared to be able to access the question. The weaker responses tended to be able to describe either the changing characteristics of the place or the sources used in the study of the place, but frequently had a poorer understanding of the relative usefulness of the sources in reflecting the changing characteristics. Some students also failed to consider change over time. Depth of knowledge for the place was critical to the success and this appeared to be related to scale. Some students referred to places that were too large to study in depth and know well and this perhaps made it hard to access higher marks. For example, referring to Manchester as a whole rather than choosing an area such as Rusholme meant that it was difficult for students to describe the changing characteristics with any degree of precision or accuracy.

Students were given a choice and they should be encouraged use this opportunity to choose wisely. For example, if they did not use many artistic sources for their local place, then it would be better to use the distant place. A significant number of students misread the question and used both places. In such cases the stronger place was credited. Students should also be advised against simply writing a potted history of their place without relevance to the question. The best students seemed to know their chosen place well, either first-hand or remotely, showing the value of fieldwork and engaging with both primary and / or secondary resources rather than a reliance on textbook content.

Planning is also critical in these 20 mark questions and students would be advised to spend time considering a short plan. Where this had been done, responses frequently had more structure and focus, thereby being directed at the question throughout. Very often, concise answers which

remained focused on the representation of changing characteristics and a systematic development of an argument, gained very high marks. Whereas, more verbose and less-focused answers would have gained higher marks with more considered thought through careful planning.

Students were asked to 'critically assess the extent to which they agreed'. The best answers were able to do this by having a very discursive approach and coming to a very explicit evidence-based conclusion. It is also worth noting that where the phrase 'such as' is used it means just that. Students were not required to use painting, photography and poetry and those who realised this often did much better than those who felt the need to include all three.

Question 3

3.1

This was the lowest performing MCQ in question 3. Just over half of students identified D as the correct answer. There was no specific pattern in choice of distractor for those who chose incorrectly.

3.2

Surprisingly for such a straightforward question, about a third of students chose an incorrect distractor (usually A or C). Students must learn key terms if they are to perform successfully in AO1 questions.

3.3

Two-thirds of students identified D as the correct answer.

3.4

Nearly all students identified C as the correct answer.

3.5

Many students drifted into explanation on this question, seeking to explain the urban heat island effect in Portland, rather than analysing the pattern of temperature variation within the city. However, on the whole a wide range of responses were seen. The better students noted the differences between the North and South and made links with the land-use map. They also considered some of the variations within the main patterns such as the colder spot in the far north-west corner that is surrounded by much higher temperatures.

Some students did not consider the scale and thought the temperatures were actual, rather than the variation from the median. This stresses the need to look carefully at scales and any written explanation on the figures.

Some students disappointingly confused compass directions such as east and west.

3.6

A full range of responses was seen on this question which discriminated well. Most students were able to access at least L2 by having some understanding of the concept of a post-modern western city and applying this to the figures. For example, the vast majority noted that there was a diverse population in **Figure 6c**. The best answers at level 3 were able to consider the extent to which Vancouver fitted the description usually by considering the contradictions in the data, noting for

example, that **Figure 6a** showed a much more functional landscape or that in terms of ethnicity, with only two groups dominating.

A few students failed to consider Vancouver at all and referred instead to a studied example such as Las Vegas. In the context of this question, this approach lacked validity as they were asked to consider the extent to which Vancouver was a post-modern western city.

3.7

This question was generally not well-answered. Very few students considered the relative importance of sustainable strategies in dealing with environmental problems. Too many students seemed to have not really moved beyond GCSE case studies such as of Curitiba or BedZED. The best approaches discussed how sustainable strategies might be used to overcome environmental problems in an urban area they had studied. For example, some students discussed the difficulties of implementing a congestion charge in Mumbai and concluded that perhaps strategies used to recycle waste are more important and useful.

3.8

Whilst there were some outstanding answers to this question, there were also many weak responses only gaining L1 or L2 credit. This was mainly due to their not evidencing what urban regeneration policies were. Many students simply referred to generic ideas such as affordable housing or minimum wage rather than actual regeneration policies. Such responses often focused on describing the causes of economic inequality or social segregation. Some students also saw gentrification as a regeneration policy, thereby failing to access credit. Better responses discussed how regeneration policies caused gentrification, therefore creating increased social segregation. This was a perfectly legitimate response.

Typical good responses used examples such as the LDDC, City Challenge, New Deal for Communities and Partnership schemes. They then considered these in a timeline approach evaluating each of them in turn, coming to an overall evidence-based conclusion. Students who were able to evaluate at least two or more policies linked to specific examples and evidence frequently went on to score level 4, with many accessing full marks.

Question 4

4.1

About 75% of students correctly identified A as the answer. Those who chose an incorrect answer, most frequently chose B. This shows the importance of learning key terms as B is the definition for death rate.

4.2

It was pleasing to see that most students were able to use their knowledge of geographical skills to identify C as the correct answer.

4.3

Most students identified D as being the correct example of a Malthusian perspective. Where an incorrect distractor was chosen, it was most frequently A.

4.4

Only about half of students chose the correct answer C.

4.5

When presented with more than one figure in AO3 questions such as this, students need to be encouraged to make connections between the figures. Many students simply described both maps in isolation with very little in the way of analysis. Students should also be encouraged to look for differences as well as connections within each figure. Both approaches provided routes to credit. Geographical descriptions were frequently poor in this question with many students referring to 'under' and 'above' the tropics. A basic north-south contrast was often cited for **Figure 7a**, even though the pattern is much more complex. Students should also be encouraged to learn and recognise some of the more major countries as many were unable to identify any countries in **Figure 7b**.

The best answers sought to analyse trends and anomalies across both figures using data in support. Connections were identified between the two figures and they also considered the extent of these connections.

4.6

In text-based resources, students need to identify the relevant information and then utilise it to address the question. Many students simply copied out large sections of the text and attempted to evaluate. These responses tended to score at the lower end of the mark range as AO1 was very limited. Better responses evaluated different strategies and compared them to the information in **Figure 8**. The best answers evaluated the scheme in **Figure 8** and then compared this with other strategies in terms of the likely success in addressing food security.

4.7

This question was poorly answered. Most students remained in level 1 or low level 2 as they either simply described population change in the chosen country with very implicit or limited reference to the Demographic Transition Model (DTM) or they simply described the different stages of the DTM. Very few answers attempted to evaluate the relevance of the DTM in relation to their chosen country.

4.8

Malaria was the most common disease considered for the response, but there was a wide variety seen such as cataracts, asthma, and skin cancer. Students were generally able to link diseases such as malaria to global environmental change. However, few students were able to discuss the impact or role of NGOs in preventing the disease from spreading. Very few considered the role of international agencies.

The best responses demonstrated detailed knowledge of diseases and their links to global environmental change. They were then able to consider the current role NGOs play and how this might have to change in the future. They included evidence-based conclusions to consider the extent to which NGOs would need to focus on diseases caused by global environmental change. There were some well-considered arguments, many students suggesting that non-communicable diseases occurring as a result of ageing populations would actually be more important.

Question 5

5.1

Nearly two-thirds of students correctly identified C as the answer. However, it was probably possible to arrive at the correct answer by process of elimination as all the distractors contained common greenhouse gases such as methane.

5.2

Most students identified that B as the correct answer. Students must learn key terms if they are to perform successfully in AO1 questions.

5.3

The important word in this question was 'local' and most students identified B as the correct answer. D was the most commonly chosen incorrect distractor, however this is clearly international, involving Ethiopia and Egypt.

5.4

Nearly all students correctly identified D.

5.5

This question generally appeared to elicit better responses than the other AO3 questions on the paper. Very few students failed to seek connections between **Figures 9a** and **9b**. Most students were able to analyse patterns and identify anomalies. Fewer students looked for geographical patterns and variation. It is worth noting that when maps with spatial variation are included, students should be encouraged to engage in spatial analysis.

5.6

Figures 10a and **10b** were generally referenced with many students picking up on the actual output being less than the potential output, thereby impacting on energy security. Some were able to apply their own knowledge to suggest reasons for this. Weaker responses tended to focus on environmental impacts of the Scandale Beck scheme without reference to energy security. Many students either did not understand the concept of energy security or simply ignored it, focusing only on the advantages and disadvantages of renewable energy.

The best responses used the resource effectively to suggest the extent to which it contributed to renewable energy. Other renewable energies were also discussed. An evidence-based conclusion included explicit assessment of the likely success in achieving energy security in the long / short term or at a variety of scales.

5.7

Some students were evidently well-prepared for this question. They had detailed knowledge of strategies employed to reduce demand and they were able to make the AO2 links to long-term

sustainability, evaluating the effectiveness in achieving this. Many included multiple strategies and came to sound conclusions on overall effectiveness.

However, there were also many weak responses. These tended to be largely descriptive with little or no evaluation. Some students misunderstood the question and considered strategies used to increase supply, such as irrigation.

5.8

This question differentiated very well. Where it was well answered, students used their case study of a specific place to good effect and were able to link it to knowledge of future technologies and evaluate the extent to which these might overcome the physical challenges. Popular choices were water resources in Iran, oil in Alaska and tar sands in Canada.

Weaker responses tended to only answer parts of the question, for example, only describing the physical challenges in the specific place. They often failed to refer to technological advances. Some students self-penalised by choosing more than one place or more than one resource. This meant that they couldn't cover one place in sufficient depth in the time available. Where this happened the best place and / or resource was credited.

It is important that students plan their answers to these 20 mark questions and ensure they identify all parts of the question.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results Statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.