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GCSE

# GEOGRAPHY

8035/2 Challenges in the Human Environment  
Report on the Examination

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8035  
November 2020

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## **General Introduction to the November Series**

This has been an unusual exam series in many ways. Entry patterns have been very different from those normally seen in the summer, and students had a very different experience in preparation for these exams. It is therefore more difficult to make meaningful comparisons between the range of student responses seen in this series and those seen in a normal summer series. The smaller entry also means that there is less evidence available for examiners to comment on.

In this report, senior examiners will summarise the performance of students in this series in a way that is as helpful as possible to teachers preparing future cohorts while taking into account the unusual circumstances and limited evidence available.

## **Overview of Entry**

The size of the entry was clearly considerably less than a normal summer series with only 328 scripts submitted for marking.

The standard of the entry was similarly unusual. Both examiners reported an absence of many scripts in the middle range of marks c. 35-55 with a dominance of marks in the <35 range. There were, however, some very good scripts with detailed responses and a few exceptional ones. Rubric infringements were still seen regularly with students answering all three optional questions in section C. This was usually less able students who had missed questions in the first two sections.

## **Comments on Individual Questions**

### **Skills questions (AO4)**

The graphs (Q1) and choropleth maps (Q4/5/6) were usually accurate when attempted, though too many students lost simple marks by missing one or other of these out. Map reading skills were more variable with most able to give a grid reference but more struggled with scale and distance.

Maths skills were, as usual, a reliable source of marks for almost all students. Where marks were lost it appeared to be the result of lack of care such as not rounding or calculating a mean instead of a median, though the latter may of course have been due to confusion.

### **Q 1: Urban Issues and Challenges**

01.5 While most students had basic knowledge and understanding about sanitation and resultant disease very few explored the issues shown in the figure. Centres are advised to remember that saying 'in figure 2' is not application, interpretation of the figure is what is required.

01.8 Students here only infrequently passed beyond low level 2. For most the point of transport was simply to get to work and sustainability was simply about reducing emissions and / or was presented as an assertion. Level 3 answers were very rare. It needs to be remembered that urban sustainability has social and economic strands and that all sustainability needs development and explanation.

01.10 The majority of students referred to the photos but only better answers moved beyond description to examine how the photographs showed solutions to problems. Bristol and London Olympic park were the two common examples with some using well-learnt evaluative detail to form very good answers.

## **Q2: The Changing Economic World**

02.3 Very few realised the question required a critique of a development indicator.

02.4 Was much more strongly answered with many answers into level 2.

02.7 Most were able to use tourism examples they had studied, sometimes supported with detail and the figure was sometimes used to support. Many were unable to progress to judging the effectiveness of tourism in reducing the development gap.

02.10 Too many students missed out this question or wrote superficial improvised answers suggesting building hospitals and / or schools in the North or even promoting tourism 'because it's mostly countryside up north' as a solution to regional disparities. When examples were applied, usually HS2 or devolution, answers became more effective, especially when evaluated. This does show the need to address all the elements of the specification as the phrase was lifted directly from there so students should have been prepared.

## **Q3: The challenge of resource management**

03.1 Very few obtained marks as they ignored the figure. When it was used the marks were easily gained.

03.4 The barrier to progress here was understanding the resource, with many misinterpreting the graph. Otherwise, knowledge and understanding of the issues was good.

## **Q4/5/6 Food / Water / Energy**

04/05/06.2 Accurate geographical description was a challenge for many and could likely be improved with practice. Compass points are useful, the coast is not 'the edge' and 'all' was often used when the answer was 'most'.

04/05/06.5 Many students struggled to move beyond describing the resources without really bringing in their own understanding to make links to sustainability. There continues to be limited ability amongst many students to explain *how* actions are more sustainable rather than just stating that they are.

## **Concluding Remarks**

This paper was very comparable with previous papers. It is a shame that it was not sat by more students as, despite the differing entry and outcomes, it served very well to offer accessible marks at one end, an opportunity to write and apply understanding in depth at the other, and to differentiate well between students.

As discussed above, the major area of weakness highlighted by this paper was a full and complete understanding of sustainability and therefore a difficulty in applying it to unseen material and scenarios. A secondary weakness was knowledge of all examples and case studies required in the specification.

Students knowledge (AO1) of both places and processes was usually sound, though many answers remained generic in place terms and the understanding (AO2) lacked depth and variety. Application (AO3) remains an area for improvement. Centres could benefit from providing their students with opportunities to practice responding to information provided and really interpreting figures and resources.

### **Mark Ranges and Award of Grades**

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