A-LEVEL
GEOGRAPHY

7037/2 Human Geography
Report on the Examination

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General

This was the fifth series of 7037/2. Students had been well-prepared with the vast majority understanding the demands of the assessment objectives. However, it is clear that not all stakeholders are familiar with questions types and the demands of the assessment objectives. This was the first time that advance information had been used and, in many instances, it was evident that the good answers had made effective use of it and had tailored their revision and preparation accordingly.

The structure of the paper was identical to previous papers and the targeting of assessment objectives was also very similar. In summary, short tariff questions targeted AO1 only i.e. knowledge and recall. There were two resource-based questions: one type targeted AO3 (geographical skills and analysis of data) and the other type 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). There is always one question which targets AO2 and specifically tests links across specification units. This question type on this paper in this series.

Over time, students seem generally more prepared for the requirements in the different assessment objectives. In particular there has been a large improvement on the AO3 analyse type questions where students are now far more focused on the skill of analysis, manipulating data and looking for connections both within and between data sets. Most students are now resisting the urge to explain the data. Essay skills have also shown progress and there were considerably more students devising a brief plan before the 20-mark essay questions, which frequently resulted in more clearly structured responses. However, the impact of Covid was evident at times, with some students not as well-rehearsed in exam technique. The cross-specification question within the optional sections (3.4, 4.4 and 5.4) was evidence of this and stuents seemedless-well prepared for this type of question.

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, with many students scoring over 100, it also allowed those of moderate ability to demonstrate their knowledge, understanding and skills. Most students seemed to manage their time effectively and only a minority seemed to have failed to complete the paper due to time constraints. In the essay questions, students need to be encouraged to address all parts of the question. Students who demonstrably answer the question will generally gain at least level 3, whereas partial responses will score level 2 and very limited responses level 1. They also need to support their points with evidence from learnt content.

Students should note that synopticity is tested through the application of knowledge both to unfamiliar situations and by exploring links within / across specification units. Students are required to ‘think on their feet’ in this examination and apply their knowledge and understanding to the context of the question. Students who recited learned material irrespective of the question set, were likely to score low marks on questions which tested AO2. This is because the AO2 type extended writing questions were not derived from one part of the specification which can be easily identified and therefore revised for. These questions were a blend of content from within one specification unit or across specification units. Teachers should ensure that their students understand that learning subject knowledge from a course textbook, without considering a range of potential connections between different aspects of their study, will not fully prepare them for the examinations.

Teachers need to ensure that students are familiar with the demands of AO2. Instead of applying their knowledge to the context of the question, some students regurgitated specification content around the theme of the question. This constituted AO1 marks only, as these answers lacked application of knowledge to the context of the question. Students need to be prepared to use their knowledge understanding of content, concepts and processes. This should then be applied to the context of the applicable 6, 9- and 20-mark questions, rather than narrating or reciting learned materials, which some more limited responses showed.

Overall, students frequently performed well 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, above 15% in all units, who were able to access Level 4, demonstrating thorough and detailed AO1 knowledge and understanding, frequently showing a breadth of examples in support. They were also able to make the AO2 links and respond in detail to the question. They also had an evaluative conclusion that supported the body of the essay. However, 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. Where they are asked to consider relative importance, they should look at what has a bigger role rather than just simply stating the importance without any comparative element. 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 ….*', this phrase requires further explanation to show student thinking. stronges leant 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.

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). As with previous series, Question 3 was the most popular option and question 5 the least popular. There was no significant variation in the performance of each option.

Question 1 Global Systems and Global Governance

1.1
This question was answered well by a large majority of students. A high proportion reached 3 or 4 marks. Most students focused on the negative changes to food webs/chains and the threat of extinction. Better responses went on to develop these points and add support through specific examples. Weaker responses tended to focus on vague threats eg 'whaling impacts food chains', without any qualification as to what the impact was. This was not creditworthy.

1.2
This was the highest performing AO3 question on the paper, with three-quarters of students achieving L2. Most students were able to use Figure 1a to pick out the main trends, focusing on Antarctica overall, then looking at the breakdown of the different regions. They were able to support the trends with data. Weaker answers often failed to pick up on the reduction in sea-level as a result of an increase in ice-mass in East Antarctica. The better responses went on to look for connections with Figure 1b and used examples of stations to support the trends seen in Figure 1b.

1.3
Most students made use of Figure 2, by referring to containerisation. They were able to apply their own knowledge of this to the image and suggest how this had played a role in globalisation. Some students were able to suggest how transport enabled Iceland to have global links despite its geographical isolation. The question discriminated well, weaker answered focussed very heavily on ideas about containerisation, whereas the stronger reponses considered the role of transport in relation to other factors such as communication. The weakest responses failed to refer to Figure 2 explicitly and simply provided generic responses about the links between transport and globalisation.

1.4
This question differentiated well. The most common choices of commodities were bananas and Apple iPhones, reflecting textbook content. The weaker responses were able to give some good AO1 knowledge about the commodity or product, and as a result very few failed to achieve L2. Many answers tended to draw very stark contrasts between the effects of trade in producer countries (all bad) and consumer countries (all good). Most students failed to address the impacts on their own lives and although there did not need to be balance for L4, we did expect at least some reference to this. The best students produced very sensitive and balanced answers and brought in many aspects of the trading relationships involved, producing quite a high proportion of very good L4 answers, with almost 20% of students achieving at least 16 marks out of 20. Most responses that scored well were of sufficient length and depth but quite a few had used continuation pages, without increasing the quality of their response. This suggests students need to be trained in producing succinct responses that answer the question without repetition.

Question 2 Changing Places

2.1
Most students easily gained 2 marks by providing simple definitions of the terms ‘experienced places’ and ‘media places’. Many students did not score beyond this as they failed to develop these definitions to outline the differences. A route to success is to use a developed example. However, when examples were used, many students did little but name the place, which was not a creditworthy point. The best answers developed the differences by considering insider and outsider perspectives and the depth to which you can really know a place.

2.2

This question proved more challenging than other AO3 questions on the paper, with less than half of students achieving L2. Many responses simply gave a very simple description of the map and image. The analysis of the changes for some became a ‘spot the difference’ exercise, rather than a geographical exercise in analysing change in place characteristics using evidence from the figure. The best answers looked at an overview of change, for example the extent of urban growth and then used both figures to analyse the extent of change in different areas, for example considering the large amount of urban growth around St Marychurch road, compared to more limited growth south of Wolborough. Many used the scale effectively to assess the extent of growth. A few students misunderstood the question and assessed the usefulness of the resources in showing change. This was not creditworthy and is a reminder that students must read the question very carefully.

2.3

The vast majority of students understood endogenous factors and were able to identify them in the painting. It was the link to how those factors contributed to the character of place that determined how successful the response was. The best students were able to recognise that there was an 'industrial' character, with grey skies and smoke. They looked at the demographics and how people were dressed, interpreting their activities in a variety of ways. Many stating it seemed 'joyful' as people were dancing. Some students did drift from the focus of the question and used knowledge of Manchester to outline the history and process of industrialisation in Manchester. Others used extra place examples, or examples of other sources to explain how endogenous factors contributed to character. This was not creditworthy. Students do need to look out for the subtleties of the question. In this case they were asked for the 'character of **this** place' not '**a** place'. This has been referred to in previous examiners reports.

2.4

This question discriminated very well. The better sresponses demonstrated that students understood they were being asked to evaluate the extent to which rebranding changes place-meaning and over almost 20% achieved L4 responses, producing detailed answers that used specific examples, that were understood and applied with success to the question. The best responses used place examples to show a temporal change over time; establishing the socio-economic characteristics of these places and the meaning and identity they created; they then discussed whether the rebranding (or sometimes more general external agencies) were able to change this. These students often used different groups of people (insiders/ outsiders) or contrasting scales of place to do this. They finished with an evaluative conclusion drawing all the themes together. When done well, these answers were a real joy to read and mark.
Weaker responses did not engage well with the theme of rebranding and relied too much on simply describing the socio-economic characteristics of their local and/or distant places. They were not able to consider the impact of rebranding on place meaning.

The question did not ask for the distant or local place to be used, giving students the freedom to bring in a range of examples to support their argument. However, some students seemed to presume they needed to use them, even if they did not support the theme of rebranding.

Although there was some common choice of places, for example Stratford, Brick Lane and Park Hill flats in Sheffield, the range of examples was very diverse. Frequently, the strongest answers were from less-well known examples, perhaps reflecting expert input from teachers, rooted in local knowledge. The study of local examples or places known well by teachers should be encouraged, as opposed to an over-reliance of textbook examples, that are quickly out of date.

Question 3 Contemporary Urban Environments

3.1
Many students found this question challenging. Most students were able to gain one mark from identifying the urban heat island effect being a root cause of increased thunderstorms in urban areas. However, many were not able to develop their answers further. Some linked thunderstorms to condensation nuclei occurring as result of pollution and some were able to gain further credit by

linking the urban heat island effect to convectional uplift. The best answers had obviously made good use of the advanced information and prepared well, sequencing information to explain the process of the formation of thunder and lightening and how this linked to urban areas.

3.2
Over half of all students were able to access L2 on this question. Answers generally focused on Figure 5b, using the data to support analysis of changes in water quality and invertebrate species. The best students were able to use this data to make connections with the changes that had taken place in Figure 5a. Some students only saw an overall improvement in water quality and/or number of invertebrate species. More sophisticated responses acknowledged that there wasn't a consistent improvement over time and thus used the data from Figure 5b more effectively. Some students read data in Figure 5b inaccurately, which impacted the accuracy of their response. This shows the importance of practising all the skills listed in the skills section and ensuring students can read simple graphs as well as more complex ones.

3.3
It was clear that some students did not recognise the terminology from the specification ‘urban policies since 1979’. Where students had prepared thoroughly and learnt an example of an urban policy, they tended to score well. However, many did not know what the term ‘urban resurgence’ was or were unable to describe the policy accurately. Some students saw regeneration and gentrification the same as resurgence, and the link between the policy and resurgence was therefore very implicit. Popular example choices were City Challenge in Hulme and the London Docklands Development Corporation. Students should be reminded that this type of 9-mark questions links different parts of the specification and therefore they will not score highly by simply writing everything they know about a case-study. They need to target their knowledge to the question. In this case, they need to evaluate the policy in relation to urban resurgence. The best answers generated a discussion about the extent to which urban resurgence happened, for example looking at the movement in and out of different socio-economic groups. Some answers were too one-sided and failed to consider different viewpoints.

3.4

This was the cross-specification question making links between CUE and the Water & Carbon cycles unit from 7037/1. Some students seemed unprepared for this type of questions and were unable to apply knowledge of carbon cycles to incineration and landfill means of waste management. Most students were able to make basic links to how both waste disposal systems create more carbon dioxide or other greenhouse gases, but only the best responses were able to link this to impact on the carbon cycle. Fast and slow cycles, carbon budgets, carbon sinks were rarely talked about – most students just made broad links to global warming at a global scale; The best answers often considered timescales with the idea of incineration causing quicker release of carbon and landfill release taking place over a much longer time. Many students knew some good examples of waste management such as AEB in Amsterdam and were able to evaluate the benefits of incineration over landfill disposal.

3.5
This proved to be the most challenging 20-mark question on the paper. Many students seemed to lack knowledge of key terminology and there were many misconceptions around edge cities and heritage quarters. Some students tried to apply new urban landscapes to their contrasting city case-studies and this often meant they had little of relevance to say if their case-study didn’t have examples of new urban landscapes. The question gave examples of new urban landscapes and

too many students seemed to think they needed to cover all three suggested and/or failed to consider those not listed such as gentrified areas. Where students chose to cover all three examples, the answer frequently lacked a sustained line of reasoning, limiting the mark awarded. Clearer geographical thinking would have raised performance on this question. Very few students seem to consider important geographical concepts such as scale and temporal change in their responses and these would enable students to access higher marks in a whole range of questions in this paper. This question also typified the importance of reading the question carefully as many students answered the question by assessing other factors that contribute to economic inequality. The question did not ask for this and so this approach was not credited.
Weaker responses scoring L1 or L2 frequently misunderstood key terminology, for example edge cities were used to describe suburban areas in the UK. Many also failed to use place examples, relying on generic descriptions of new urban landscapes and / or patterns of economic inequality. Fortress developments were the best understood and stronger responses used examples to explain how these intensified social segregation. The better students often took a comparative approach, considering different scales and locations. For example, considering the differences between large scale residential fortress developments in South Africa versus smaller scale locations preventing access for homeless people in London. The better responses often went beyond the three examples listed in the question, with answers considering gentrified areas often gaining higher marks. Despite the challenge, nearly two-thirds gained at least Level 3.

Question 4 Population and Environment

4.1
This was a straightforward accessible question for many students, especially where they had prepared well and knew and understood Malthus's perspective on population growth. Almost 30% of students scored full marks. Some students confused maths terminology such as geometric, arithmetic and exponential growth. Students developed their answers by developing on the basic points about pessimistic outlooks and explaining concepts such as carrying capacity and Malthus's checks. A few students exemplified Malthus's viewpoint using place examples and this is to be commended. Where examples are developed in these AO1 4-mark questions, students tend to score higher marks.

4.2
There was a lot of data to process in Figure 6 and students found this question very accessible. It is worth noting that students do not need to use all the data presented to them and selecting what to use is part of the skill of analysis. Where students have a good structure in these AO3 questions, they tend to score more marks. It is pleasing to note the large numbers of students using acronyms to help them plan their answers, focusing on different aspects of analysis such as making connections, trends, anomalies and data manipulation.
Better responses featured an overview of the main trends and connections between HDI and ecological footprints and then use data to exemplify these relationships. The best responses considered the continent groupings and looked at the more complex relationship with the happy planet index. Weaker responsess, as with other AO3 questions tended to look at individual data points, in this case looking at individual countries and taking a more step-by-step approach.

4.3
Many students were not able to even identify two climate types. There were frequently vague references to 'dry' and 'wet' areas. These answers typically struggled to access anything above L1.

Many students were not able to make links between the climate and human activities. Many responses were limited by lack of reference to precipitation, considering the overall climate. This was particularly true where polar climates were used. Although the question referred to human activities, most students limited their responses to agriculture. Where students had prepared well, they were able to used their detailed knowledge of farming and relate this to knowledge of precipitation for the chosen climate type. For example, there were some very detailed responses about monsoon rainfall and rice farming.

4.4
This question proved quite challenging, as with question 3.4 and 5.4. This was the cross-specification question and required students to link their knowledge of global governance and food security. Answers were frequently very generic, showing a lack of application of knowledge between the two units. They were often able to write about food security but their understanding and application of the concept of global governance was often very limited. Only a few students used specific knowledge of UN agencies studied in the global governance unit in this question. Better answers concentrated on FAO and famine relief or on the Millennium Development Goals. Some students accessed higher marks by evaluating other factors relative to global governance, this was a legitimate approach. For example, considering the success of the green revolution or NGOs in comparison to the work of the UN. Some students considered recent events in Ukraine, which was creditworthy and showed good awareness of current global issues and 'thinking like a geographer'.

4.5
This question requires students to consider the importance of physical and human factors in creating global patterns of diseases. A common route was to consider the different patterns and causes of non-communicable diseases such as Coronary Heart Disease and biologically-transmitted diseases such as Malaria. The more sophisticated responses featured relative importance and noted the complexity between them; even when the causes appear to be related to physical factors, management relates to human factors. The best students stood out when they also considered temporal change and how the patterns of disease have changed over time, due to human factors or climate change.
On the whole, the question seemed to be very accessible. The differentiator was the ability to consider the impact on global patterns and relative importance of physical and human factors. This question demonstrates the importance of reading the question carefully as some students failed to access L3 because they failed to consider the global aspect of the question. They wrote lengthy answers relating to their local health case-study and this didn't fully address the question.

Question 5 Resource Security

5.1
Very few students answered questions in this unit. Many students demonstrated poor knowledge of the two terms in the question. Most were able to gain two marks by giving simplistic definitions, and those scoring more highly went on to develop the differences for example, considering economic viability.

5.2
The figures in this question seemed accessible for students, and this was the highest scoring AO3 question in the three options. Students engaged well with analysing the spatial variation in the storage of nuclear waste. Most then went on to look for connections with Figure 5b, noting that

some of the states generating the most electricity by nuclear power also store some of the largest amounts of waste. They also considered anomalies to this relationship, such New Hampshire and Maine. Some also considered the relationship between the amount of waste stored and contribution to the waste fund. Again, it should be noted that students do not need to use all the data presented to them and selecting what to use is part of the skill of analysis. For example, students could get maximum marks from only considering two out of three data sets. Weaker responses frequently failed to use data in support, simply using terms such 'most', 'least'. Students are reminded that they select, use, refer to and manipulate data in these AO3 questions.

5.3
This proved to be a very accessible question for students and where they had prepared well, learning their specified mineral ore, they tended to score higher marks as they were able to add in specific appropriate detail. This was particularly apparent where they chose a specific location as well. For example, many chose copper and referred to specific mining locations. Weaker repsonses described a mineral ore, but showed less consideration of the sustainability issues. Many responses were rather one-sided and students should be reminded about ensuring they look at different viewpoints in these types of questions. The best students were able to construct a well-argued case frequently considering sustainability issues and the extent to which these can be mitigated by management strategies. They also considered this with relation to the role in global commerce – which aspect many students did not consider.

5.4
As with 3.4 and 5.4, many students seem unprepared for this cross-specification question. They were asked to apply knowledge of the carbon cycle to causes of water stress. Many students found this very challenging. Many responses were very generic and did not use evidence in support. The best responses used examples of locations suffering water stress and were able to use their knowledge of the location to suggest how changes in the carbon cycle might affect the level of water stress. Teaching concepts through use of examples, certainly provides students more to develop in all exam questions. Weaker responses tended to focus on changes in the carbon cycle with simple links to increased evaporation or more droughts.

5.5
This question proved very challenging for students. However, it differentiated well and when students had prepared well they frequently scored L4 (more students achieved L4 than the other two options, despite it being the lowest scoring essay from the options). These students had learnt a detailed TNC case-study and were able to discuss environmental impacts relative to profits in depth, evaluating different arguments. There was some good knowledge of the well-publicised environmental problems in Nigeria (Shell) and the Gulf of Mexico (Deepwater, BP). As well as the AO1 knowledge being quite strong there was a clear and pointed critique of these organisations showing some strong environmental awareness and concern. However, many students wrote very limited responses, without the use of examples or evidence in support. Learning case-study material to support answers is key to success in these essay questions.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the Results Statistics page of the AQA Website.