AQA

GCSE

GEOGRAPHY

8035/3 Geographical Applications
Report on the Examination

Section A – Issue Evaluation

General observations

Students appeared to have been reasonably comfortable with the resources and this suggested that they had spent an adequate amount of time preparing for this part of the examination. In most cases students showed an understanding of the issue and demonstrated an awareness of the balance and complexity of decisions that affect local economies and environments. In preparation for this part of the examination it is worth remembering the following points.

- There is always a synoptic element to this part of the examination. This means that although the issue may be driven by a particular part of the course, it will touch on elements from across the specification and it is worth identifying these when preparing for the examination.

- There is always an element of considering aspects of both human and physical/environmental geography and this is often expressed in relation to the "human-environmental" interface.

- There will be questions that specifically relate to the particular location of the issue and other questions that are more generally linked to the subject under discussion. For example, Questions 2.2, 2.4 and 3 were directly related to the Cayman Islands, while Questions 1.4 and 2.6 were broader discussions related to the overall understanding of the topic of the development of tourism.

- There is a high proportion of AO3 marks within this section of the examination paper and as such the expectation is that students will select appropriate evidence from the resources in order to develop a discussion, and in some cases reach a judgement. In that context there is a distinction between simply selecting and copying information, which is generally seen as Level 1, and actually using the selected information as evidence to support ideas. Those students who develop points and then support those points by quoting specific evidence generally produce responses at Level 2 and level 3.

1.1 Approximately half of the students selected the correct answer, with virtually all those who selected the incorrect answer choosing Africa. In some cases, there was inaccurate interpretation of the compound line chart in Figure 1.

1.2 The majority of students were able to complete the bar chart accurately. It was evident that a small number of students did not appear to have a ruler, and in some cases this may have affected the level of accuracy. The expectation is that relatively basic skills questions will be completed with a high degree of accuracy.

1.3 This question presented few problems and most students were able to calculate the total spending accurately. In some cases, a lot of written calculation was evident, suggesting that some students may not have had a calculator, which is allowed in this examination. There are always going to be maths based questions across the examination papers so it is important that students are properly equipped to deal with them.

1.4 This question gave students the opportunity to consider the "Changing Economic World" element of the specification which identifies the development of tourism as a vehicle for delivering economic development. As such, the question had a broad perspective and did not have a specific reference to the Cayman Islands. Consequently, students had the opportunity to either focus the answer on the resources and/or include a wider understanding of the key idea expressed in the question by bringing in wider learning. Both of these approaches were seen in student responses, and were equally successful when used in an analytical way to address the key idea expressed in the question.

At the lower end of the mark range students generally identified basic factors with little or no explanation, often making generic observations about creating jobs and incomes or stating that tourism creates taxation or can increase the quality of life. These ideas often formed the basis for some development and where students developed them they generally produced secure Level 2 responses. For example, the idea of more secure and higher incomes leading to improvements in specific quality of life factors (improved housing conditions, increased access to basic services, better nutrition and health etc) or where additional taxation created the opportunity for increased investment in public services (healthcare and education were frequently quoted).

At the higher level students offered more detailed analysis about how tourism can be a significant driver of economic development. Some brought in a more balanced discussion which considered that, while tourism can create economic opportunities, it can perhaps be slightly more complex in that factors such as economic leakage, changing demand and seasonality mean that reliance on tourism as an economic driver can be a risk. A number of students considered this perspective in relation to the impact of Covid or civil conflict on the economy of tourist destinations.

2.1 A significant proportion of students did not attempt this question. The question appeared to present few difficulties for those students who did attempt it, with the majority completing the pie chart accurately. It is not unusual for students to fail to attempt graph completion questions, and this is commonly seen across the ability range.

2.2 The majority of students were able to suggest an appropriate reason why a significant proportion of visitors to the Cayman Islands come from the USA. The most common responses were based around the ideas of accessibility and affordability, although a number of students brought in points about the quality of services available and the lack of language challenges. Those students who did not gain any credit generally simply identified a generic attraction, which could apply to any location, for example "because it has beaches".

2.3 The majority of students considered that the cruise industry was an example of a global industry and often offered a basic reason which was essentially based on the idea that cruise ships went all over the world. A limited proportion of students developed this theme by identifying a number of specific country or continent locations or observing that cruise ships go to HICs, NEEs and LICs, or mentioning the growth of the cruise industry in specific rapidly developing areas such as China. Those students who opted to consider that the cruise industry was not an example of a global industry often produced more thoughtful responses by arguing that as an industry it is really only open to the wealthier parts of the world and that most large cruise companies are linked to HICs or that many countries (especially land-locked countries) have no links to the cruise industry.

2.4 The majority of students were able to identify the physical characteristics of the Cayman Islands that might attract visitors, with Seven Mile Beach and the coral reef as the most commonly used examples. It was evident that the idea of "cultural attractions" was less well understood and a number of students did not reference any examples of cultural attractions. Of those that did, observations about craft markets and local food were commonly used. Responses were frequently restricted to Level 1 because students often simply identified one example of each of physical and cultural attractions with no real development of why these factors are significant in attracting visitors. Those students who identified a number of factors and made an attempt to explain why those factors would help to attract visitors generally achieved full marks.

2.5 It was clear that a significant proportion of students did not fully understand the idea of a "multi-use development" and failed to appreciate that the proposed development had a wide range of functions beyond that of managing cruise liner visitors. In many cases responses were based around simply copying elements from the resources with points about it having "social and economic functions" or "a cruise terminal and a cargo port" commonly used. While these observations offered some understanding they did not fully address the command "Explain" and consequently generally achieved one mark. Those students who defined the terminology and then developed this by using examples achieved both marks.

2.6 The majority of students demonstrated some awareness of the way that tourism development can put pressure on the environment, although many did not fully explore the idea of "economic-environmental conflict" as expressed within the specification. The question did not specifically reference the Cayman Islands, so there was an opportunity to either focus the answer on the resources and/or include a wider understanding of the key idea expressed in the question by bringing in wider learning. Both of these approaches were acceptable and both were evident in answers.

At the lowest level students often simply identified an economic advantage and an environmental change from the resources without really entering any sort of discussion. Those students who developed this theme by suggesting that tourism development is often at a cost to the environment (removing vegetation and animal habitats to build hotels; diverting or changing water courses to supply water to resorts/golf courses) achieved a secure Level 2 mark, while those students who offered an appreciation of the complexity of the economic v environment debate achieved at the highest level.

There were a number of excellent responses- some of these considered how the economic – environment balance may vary in relation to different types of tourism (references to ecotourism were evident) or considered that while tourism can put pressure on environments, that pressure can be mitigated by using money generated by tourism to manage environments sustainably. A small proportion of students drifted into ideas about climate change and focused on a largely global discussion. While this approach had some potential merit, it was usually self-limiting since this was not really the scale of the debate being considered.

3 The topic of tourism development appeared to be clearly understood and students were generally able to show an awareness of the complexity of the issue and an appreciation that there were significant advantages and disadvantages to each position. Only a small proportion of students failed to attempt this question or scored zero marks, suggesting a good level of general understanding and accessibility. It was evident that the majority of students had been adequately prepared for this part of the examination and virtually all students showed an understanding of the

issues associated with the development of tourism within an environmentally sensitive environment and the complex balance between economic gains and environmental costs. The quality of answers was largely determined by how effectively the information within the resources had been developed or linked in order to construct a discussion which supported the chosen position. Level 1 responses tended to be characterised by students who simply identified and largely copied information from Figure 3, in some cases virtually word for word. While the selection and copying of appropriate evidence to support a chosen position was clearly creditworthy, it did not generally convey any degree of evaluation or sense of the relative importance of different factors identified within the resources.

Those students who developed some of their identified points or offered a degree of evaluative thinking moved into Level 2. A more thorough and clearly evidenced and evaluative use of the resources to support the chosen position moved students into Level 3. The more developed answers were often accompanied by a short conclusion which often brought the discussion back to the original aim of the question and reinforced the reasons for the selected position. A number of students offered impressively sophisticated ideas, for example observations about potential short term gains and longer term risks or a broader debate about the relative impacts of different types of tourism (with some bringing into their discussion points about ecotourism and links to sustainability).

A number of students selected a position and then appeared to use evidence which was contrary to their choice, which was slightly self-defeating. Where a question asks students to select a chosen position, it is clearly legitimate to consider both sides of the argument, but the expectation is that the stronger part of the evidence will be used to support the chosen position. If this approach (considering advantages and disadvantages) is used, writing a conclusion which clearly brings the discussion back to support the chosen position is a useful strategy. The key to achieving the highest marks on the issue evaluation question is to ensure that students are familiar with the synoptically linked elements within the specification and use information and ideas expressed within the whole of the resource booklet effectively when supporting their decision.

Section B – Fieldwork

Unseen Fieldwork – General observations

The Unseen Fieldwork part of the examination is made up of a number of scenarios where the stem of the question outlines an investigation or identifies a hypothesis to be tested. As such, the questions will always include some data or information pertaining to the identified investigation. It is important that students read the stem of the question carefully and fully understand the significance of the information provided in relation to the aim of the investigation. The questions in this part of the examination will be testing AO3 (interpretation, analysis and evaluation of geographical information) and AO4 (selection, adaptation and use of skills and techniques).

4.1 A significant proportion of students did not attempt this question. The question appeared to present few difficulties for those students who did attempt it, with the vast majority completing the map accurately. It is not unusual for students to fail to attempt map completion questions, and this is commonly seen across the ability range.

4.2 In most cases students identified that the highest house prices were in the town centre and on the western edge of the town. Some students appeared to think that this was all that was required and consequently failed to fully address the idea of "pattern" as expressed in the question. Those

students who demonstrated a broader understanding of the idea of pattern, often by identifying both the location of the highest and lowest priced areas and also the east-west price difference (higher in the west, lower in the east) scored full marks. A number of students simply listed the areas (A- G) with the corresponding house prices, which did not address the idea pattern and was consequently not creditworthy.

4.3 The key to this question was showing an understanding of the aim of the enquiry and identifying ways in which adaptations/additions to the data collection would enhance the enquiry. Those students who fully appreciated this generally produced sound ideas, with many identifying factors such as using smaller areas or smaller/different price ranges in order to get finer data or looking at a range of property types in order to get a broader perspective.

4.4 It was evident that a significant number of students were not familiar with the construction of isoline maps and consequently the map was successfully completed by only a small proportion of students. Since there are a significant number of skills marks across the examination papers it may be useful to have a simplified skills checklist (all of the skills that can be assessed are listed within the specification) that can be used during the teaching of the course to ensure that all of the skills are identified and practiced.

4.5 The majority of students made the point that the temperature was highest in the town centre or lowest at the edge of the map. This general description was awarded one mark. Those students who developed this idea by considering the rate of change (lower with distance from the town centre) or changing rates of decline in relation to direction were able to gain full marks. Where a map is used as a source of data in this section, the use of direction and distance is often a useful way of describing patterns in more detail.

4.6 Only a very small proportion of students selected the correct response to this question and it was evident that many students were not familiar with some of the presentation techniques listed. Since there are a significant number of skills marks across the examination papers it may be useful to have a simplified skills checklist (all of the skills that can be assessed are listed within the Specification) that can be used during the teaching of the course to ensure that all of the skills are identified and practiced.

4.7 A significant majority of students were able to plot the given data on the scatter graph accurately. Only a small minority of students did not attempt the question.

4.8 This question was generally addressed effectively, with a significant proportion of students suggesting that the data showed a positive relationship and many supported this point by using accurate data. At the highest level students made observations about the strength of the relationship, often considering that it was a weak positive relationship and used data to support this view by identifying clear anomalies.

4.9 A significant proportion of students were able to suggest a suitable question and offer some justification. The key to the question was to demonstrate a clear understanding of the aim of the

enquiry by reading the stem of the question carefully and then forming a question which would clearly be appropriate to the aim of the enquiry and be realistic in the context of a questionnaire. There were a number of appropriate ideas most commonly the idea of reasons for the visit (work, holiday, visiting relatives) and mode of transport. Both of these ideas were clearly justifiable since they could potentially influence the length of stay. A number of students repeated the idea about distance expressed in Figure 6, which was not creditworthy since the question clearly stated "additional information".

Familiar Fieldwork – General observations

The Familiar Fieldwork questions are designed to give students the opportunity to express their understanding of the individual enquiry work that they have personally carried out. The questions will always relate to elements of the Geographical Enquiry table (Strands 1 to 6) found within the geography specification.

It is important that students identify the title of their geographical enquiry fully and accurately within the spaces provided on the examination paper since responses to the questions need to clearly reflect the aim of the stated enquiry.

5.1 The majority of students were able to suggest a reason why their chosen location was suitable for data collection. The more common ideas were based on nearness to school and availability of data. Having identified an appropriate reason most students failed to develop their answer and consequently only achieved one mark. Where a two mark question asks for one reason only, there needs to be some development for the second mark. Those students who did achieve both marks either offered some development ("it was suitable because it was near to school so did not take long to get there and gave us more time to collect data") or offered some development which was clearly linked to the aim of the enquiry as expressed in the title.

5.2 It was evident that a significant number of students were either not clear what was meant by "Justify" or simply failed to identify the command expressed in the question. Consequently, over 50% of students failed to get more than a single mark because in most cases they had simply identified a primary data collection method without offering any justification. Those students who did offer some justification often produced thoughtful responses which were clearly linked to the aim of the enquiry as expressed in the title. For example, identifying the method as measuring the speed of flow at different sites along a river was justified by suggesting that it would show how velocity changed downstream and this was then linked to testing the Bradshaw model which was identified within the title of the enquiry. A small number of students failed to attempt this question and it was evident that there were a number of students who were not clear about the meaning of "primary data".

5.3 A significant proportion of students talked about data collection techniques rather than data presentation techniques and consequently many students either failed to score any marks or did not attempt the question. Of those students that did discuss their data presentation methods outcomes varied between those that simply identified presentation methods with no attempt to "assess the effectiveness" to those who began to offer some evaluative assessment in terms of the ease of construction, visual clarity and usefulness in relation to analysing the data. In general terms this question was not addressed very effectively.

5.4 The majority of students simply tended to describe their results or the limitations of their data collection, often offering thoughtful observations about these aspects of their enquiry. However, this did not address the key idea of the question because it failed to consider this in relation to the accuracy of results and consequently there was no real reference or link to how this may have affected the validity of the conclusion. Those students who did express a link between the data and accuracy of results generally got into Level 2, but very few students fully developed their ideas in relation to how this affected the validity of the conclusion. The nine mark question within the familiar fieldwork section is quite complex and always demands links between key strands of the enquiry process (as described in the six enquiry strands within the specification). Although there were a limited number of very good answers to this question, it appeared that in many cases students were not totally clear about how to approach this style of question.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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