

AUSTRALIA IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC (AAP 315116)

59 CANDIDATES SAT THE AAP EXAM THIS YEAR

SECTION A- Core Short Essays

GENERAL COMMENT

On this section both short essays were rated together to achieve the overall rating awards. Given the nature of the two questions, this often resulted in students writing a more expansive answer to Q1, and a less detailed Q2 response. The final overall ratings on C2 & C3 reflect the holistic assessment of this section.

QUESTION 1

This question asked candidates to consider all of the physical geography of ONE ASIAN Nation in the region. In considering physical geography all aspects related to the environment could have been discussed. This includes, but is not exclusive to, location (hemisphere and latitude), configuration (shape, size), topography (for example: mountains, rivers, plains), climate range and characteristics, vegetation and degradation of the environments - preferably in that order so that each topic can build on the explanation for the next. For example if the country is a north/south archipelago in the Northern Hemisphere, such as Japan, the range of climates and vegetation will reflect this or, conversely, if the country is landlocked with most being 1000 metres above sea level, this will also satisfy the need to assess the degree of diversity. Assessment, by definition, is determining the significance and extent and thus, in this case, the interrelationships between the physical aspects of the geography; candidates' answers had to recognise this to achieve the highest award.

There were a range of nations chosen by candidates and all were relevant to the Asian region. Among the most represented were China, Indonesia, Philippines and India. Best answers looked at a range of physical features and supported their descriptions with named examples, such as rivers, mountains, deserts and statistics relating to them, citing height, temperatures and rainfall. It was important to spell the names (with capital letters) of examples correctly, for example notable mistakes included the 'Himalayers' and the 'Gobi Dessert'.

Many answers were very general; comments such as 'climate is very diverse' or 'the country is very flat' do not add a lot to the depth of the answer. Many answers repeated these general statements throughout.

A significant number of scripts skipped what could be called the "boring facts", choosing to dwell upon more exciting elements of the physical geography such as volcanoes, earthquakes and tsunamis. Candidates must be very clear what aspects are relevant to physical geography as some included population characteristics, urban areas or agriculture which are categorised human geography.

This question is one which, when related to the course content, could have been anticipated and thus prepared for in detail; unfortunately only the best answers appeared to have done this preparation.

QUESTION 2

Some students were not clear on what the term 'ethnic' meant. A significant number confused ethnic and ethics. It would have been a good strategy to define what was understood by the term. Answers which discussed only religion were penalised as, although ethnicity may imply religion, they are not interchangeable as one is genetic and the other cultural. The question required a discussion of the racial identity of the population of a PACIFIC nation. A wide range of countries were chosen and their racial diversity discussed. Although not specified in the question, an assessment of the significance and consequences of this racial diversity was required by Criterion 2. Thus credit was given for mentioning racial tensions such as the Bougainville conflict. The nature of the question meant that assessment of the impact of ethnicity was not stipulated, so candidates were not strictly penalised if they did not address this element, even though C2 may have expected some evaluation.

Candidates would have been well advised to choose a country which allowed them to demonstrate a wide range of knowledge. One of the best is Fiji and this was by far the most numerous example used. Some students correctly said that many Pacific countries, such as The Solomon Islands, are racially diverse but were unable to describe any further than stating that the people were both Melanesian and Polynesian. Papua New Guinea was discussed by a significant number of students but they were unable to do much more than stating that there are a large number of 'native' tribes with stronger answers mentioning the problems this has caused and will continue to do so. A significant number of candidates did not attempt the question and were consequently penalised. This reinforces the need to at least have a go to avoid a Z rating.

SECTION B- Australia's Changing Relationships Essay

GENERAL COMMENTS:

Statistics and data (for instance, Indonesia's ranking in the global economy) should be based on reports from the past two years - more recent data will always be considered more favourably than out-of-date information. If the data presented was the only available, then some comment on the reason will always be an excellent analytical element for this section.

Candidates are reminded to apply their knowledge to the specific question, in particular through topic and concluding sentences of paragraphs. The question may not be to the candidate's liking, but successful examination technique is to adapt knowledge and answer the question posed, not the one they want to answer.

Candidates are expected to write in essay form; a structured introduction and conclusion is expected.

QUESTION 3

(31 candidates answered this question)

Question required focus on diversity and change; describing aid projects alone did not cater for explanation of the "changing nature".

Candidates must address the purpose of Australian aid, whether it be altruistic, humanitarian, economic, strategic etc. Doing this adds to the analysis expectation of the criterion and the question.

It is quite fine to use acronyms, but the convention is to write out the full title first, then the acronym in brackets i.e. Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT).

STRONG ANSWERS:

Referred to DFAT aid development policy documents such as Aid for Trade.

Australia's commitment to humanitarian aid and involvement in peacekeeping such as in Timor Leste and ethnic conflicts in the Solomon Islands.

Effectively used aid projects as examples of objectives of aid (e.g. Pacific Seasonal Workers Program to show how aid is given to benefit Australia as a donor country rather than meeting the needs of the recipient nation).

CANDIDATES ARE ENCOURAGED TO

Give examples of events that have strained Australia's relationship with countries in the region (e.g. Indonesia and Timor Leste).

Consider the role of political leaders in the shaping the direction of country partnerships. (Given the nature of this question, some discussion from stronger candidates on the political philosophy at play would have been rewarded).

Discuss the changing amount of Australia's commitment to foreign aid as representative of changing nature of partnerships in the region.

Include changes from AusAid to DFAT.

WHEN MAKING "FUTURE PREDICTIONS" STRONGER CANDIDATES SHOWED:

Engagement with current affairs (e.g. the consequences of Scott Morrison's announcement to move the Australian embassy in Israel to Jerusalem upon the Indonesian Muslim populace).

Aid is given to ensure security of Australia and stability in the region.

CREATIVE ANSWERS RECOGNISED:

Countries in the region are not solely reliant on aid from Australia; aid is delivered from other nations in the region such as China, Japan and New Zealand.

The role of climate change in the Pacific Islands (that is, Australia is investing in infrastructure but if sea levels continue to rise that infrastructure may be defunct; Australia needs to be committing to the Paris Agreement to reduce carbon emissions).

The need for Australia's immigration policy to change to accept climate refugees.

In the future Indonesia's economy may be stronger than Australia's.

EXAMINERS WOULD HAVE LIKED TO SEE:

Candidates consider how Australia responds to the interests of other nations in the region, such as China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

Correct spelling and use of capital letters for titles, especially "Prime Minister".

Terminology such as Official Development Assistance.

QUESTION 4

(28 candidates answered this question)

Candidates selected either Vietnamese or Indian ethnic groups; one or two candidates discussed China. -
Key vocabulary used: assimilated, first wave, displace, rhetoric, homogenous.

STRONG ANSWERS:

Essay response had a thesis (e.g. immigration benefits Australia)

Student visas; 457 Visa and the Pacific Islanders Labour Act

Discuss arrival of immigrants by boat and plane

Changes to the Colombo Plan

WHEN CONSIDERING FUTURE PREDICTIONS:

Creative answers included

Increasing issues with urbanisation, urban sprawl and strain on resources (employment, housing costs,

Medical services, traffic congestion)

Off-shore detention policies

Current Australian population trends (i.e. Australia's ageing population)

Need for skilled labour (e.g. immigrants taking positions as doctors and moving to rural areas)



EXAMINERS WOULD HAVE LIKED TO SEE

Protocol is to state acronyms in full then provide abbreviation in brackets; subsequent references can use acronym (e.g. VFR tourism – ‘visiting friends and relatives’).

Watch spelling e.g. immigration, migrants **MUST** be spelt correctly

SECTION C- TOURISM ESSAY

QUESTION 5

OVERALL COMMENTS

The nature of the question affected many answers. Generally the description of tourist practices in their chosen destinations was effective, if too general in many cases. Many students ignored or gave cursory attention to growth reasons or trends, even for their chosen destinations. Similarly, management practices and programmes were often described generally, briefly or not at all. Some students only described one destination and credit was given to students who used an Asian and a Pacific destination in their analysis.

SPECIFIC COMMENTS

Responders must mention trends in management practices to sustain positive impacts. Must use specific examples from destination rather than generalising, like Australia or Thailand, which could mean such cases could apply anywhere.

The unit requires that a general overview of reasons for growth and current trends throughout the AAP region be described, but the question narrowed the focus- students were not penalised for concentrating on their chosen destinations, but the unit was designed to give a wider perspective. Future students should be prepared for a general overview and apply knowledge to question asked.

Positive impacts threw many students, so many mentioned positives but quickly moved onto negatives, such as concentrating on negative trends like sex tourism. Candidates needed to change focus to the positives i.e. extra tourist dollar, increased family income for service providers, improved health regulations etc. the nature of the question was not clearly understood by students and therefore students were not penalised.

Higher ratings were given if the essay was a synthesised response and did not read like a travelogue- that is separate descriptions of locations without links to each other.

Candidates are advised to answer the posed question by applying broad knowledge and understanding to the specific question rather than create a 'mind-dump' response.

Generally with this essay, rule of thumb is 1/3 growth and trends, 1/3 impacts and 1/3 management practices.

Management discussion needs to use key words/terms such as sustainable, or variations, codes of ethics/conduct, Millennium or Sustainable Development Goals.

SECTION D- National Crises Hypothetical

OVERALL COMMENT

This section of the exam requires a different approach, both because it uses an imaginary country and candidates therefore have to apply their real knowledge, but also because it includes a 'blurb' of key data. This 'blurb' **MUST** be used. When ignored the response will generally be of lesser quality than responses which utilise this data. Candidates may also become creative by making up their own data and adding this to the provided information. It is also essential that the response be written as a REPORT with, at the minimum, sub-headings.

Actually personalising their Country A, giving it a name, naming and locating places, rivers, mountains etc. and then referring to these names in their report will always impress the markers, as would a map and other graphics, but time is an issue here which markers understand. The 2018 question stated that candidates were presenting a report for an NGO (Non-Government Organisation), it would have added to the response if candidates had identified and described the NGO.

QUESTION 6

(10 candidates answered this question)

Nearly all candidates chose to discuss the impacts of climate change while nuclear contamination, an oil spill and a civil war were also chosen.

The standard of the answers to this question was generally good and some were excellent. It was clear that most candidates had studied and prepared for this section by using information from the case studies from the course outline. However, suggestions for further improvement are provided below:

Report format **MUST BE** used. This means headings, sub headings, dot points and/or a numbering system. Some candidates did not use any of these features. The report format is outlined on page 8 of the AAP315116 course document and should be followed closely.

<https://www.tasc.tas.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/pdf/courses/aap315116-1.pdf>

Candidates must refer to the relevant information from the given blurb about Country A in their answers. A short introduction is recommended, but this should not be so long that it detracts from the discussion of the chosen crisis. Some candidates wrote more on their introduction than they did addressing parts a), b) and c). Some introductions also did not take into account the size and location of Country A.

Some students described the incorrect location of Country A as being in the Pacific Ocean and so mentioned incorrect neighbouring countries such as Thailand and Malaysia.

Nuclear contamination via power plants is unlikely for a country at the level of Country A's development. It would be highly unlikely that Country A would be nuclear energy ready given its economic status, especially with a low GNI and high rural population – it would be difficult to argue the case for this. The use of a civil war as a national crisis is plausible, but would need to include a discussion about the two conflicting parties. Better answers here discussed the data on ethnicity from the information and data provided.

It is recommended that candidates refer to the major effects of the crisis that they have provided in their response to question a) when analysing the responses and their effectiveness in questions b) and c). In several cases these impacts were not referred to again at all. Candidates are reminded that for this question each part (a, b and c) is linked.

Information provided must be relevant and likely given Country A's location and data. Better answers were able to relate Country A's low GNI PPP and the high % of people in the primary sector, many most likely subsistence farmers, to its inability to fix most of the issues themselves without the assistance of foreign aid and assistance. Candidates must be specific about the impacts of their crisis.

Some candidates wrote a generic report about the causes of climate change without referring to Country A's response but did, however, discuss Australia's response. When writing about the responses to the crisis candidates need to be specific. Other candidates focused too much on re-educating the population to enable them to live in other countries without looking at more immediate strategies such as moving villages to higher ground, building sea walls or combatting increasing salinity of the water supply. Better answers considered a range of immediate and long term environmental and social impacts and solutions and were able to effectively evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of each.

In addition to the causes of climate change, many students discussed the consequences of climate change with a discussion around the impact of sea level rise. Responses discussed the country becoming inundated and the need to relocate thousands of residents who will be impacted by loss of habitable land. Some of these responses read as though they were for low lying countries such as Kiribati and the Maldives, however, Country A would be physically be very different to these countries.

Candidates should use data to enhance their descriptions of the impacts of the crisis on Country A, and in their evaluations of the various responses - e.g. the percentage of the land which is now inundated during storms, the height, length and location of sea walls being constructed, the number of wells which have been destroyed by increasing salinity, the number of people who will need to be relocated etc.

In reference to Australia's response to the crisis of the civil war, some candidates discussed the Australian Defence Force involvement and taking sides with the Government of Country A. Such a response would require discussion around why the ADF would be involved and the political links that would require them to intervene.

QUESTION 7

(49 candidates answered this question)

There were 49 responses to this question. While there were some good responses to this question (many answers demonstrated a general knowledge and understanding of Country A and its crisis) most candidates chose to write about flooding, cyclones, an earthquake or a tsunami as the natural national crisis.

Suggestions for further improvement are provided below:

The question requires students to use report format. The report format is outlined on page 8 of the AAP315116 course document and should be followed closely.

<https://www.tasc.tas.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/pdf/courses/aap315116-1.pdf>

Some students did not write in report format and instead chose to write a narrative or a TV news report about the crisis and simply retelling the story of a specific crisis.

Successful and comprehensive reports included the use of dot points, tables and maps to list and highlight the effects on the social, environmental and economic impacts of the natural crisis. Another point of note was the change in timing of the crisis. Candidates often had the event and subsequent crisis occurring long enough in the past to give themselves opportunities to write about the short and long term effects of the crisis, while some candidates had the event recently occurring and subsequently adopted a 'too early to tell' position assessing the effectiveness of the national and international responses.

Candidates' responses that contained a rewriting of the information and the data provided in the exam paper did not enhance their discussion, central argument or gain additional marks. This type of time consuming content reiteration is strongly discouraged. This information should be used to make inferences about the level of development and associated response. Most students were able to identify Country A as a developing country. Some students gave Country A an appropriate name while some used already existing place names such as Palau and Honiara – this is discouraged.

The introduction of the report should set the scene for the reader and candidates generally did this by including a name of Country A, describing its location and proximity to neighbouring countries and surrounding seas (sometimes incorrectly) and then describing the event that has occurred to cause the crisis.

Often candidates would discuss the event causing the crisis as impacting the entire country. Strong responses gave specific locations of the event having the greatest impact. Often, tsunamis, flooding and earthquakes were devastating to the entire island country. Whilst a country could share the economic and emotional pain of such an event, such events occur in specific regions and locations of countries with particular areas more directly impacted than others.

It was also clear that some students had approached this question with a 'one size fits all approach'. Many responses were clearly prepared and students were going to use them wherever Country A was located. Responses like this did not take into account the data that was presented in the blurb and on the map of Page 7 of the exam paper.

CAUSE AND EFFECT

When writing about the cause and effect of a natural national crisis on Country A, candidates are advised to discuss a specific crisis that has taken place, following some discussion of why Country A has experienced such a crisis (commonly the effects of a cyclone, earthquake or tsunami). Many responses correctly identified the shifting of tectonic plates or fault lines as a cause of earthquakes and subsequent tsunamis (if applicable). Few candidates were able to correctly identify adjacent tectonic plates to Country A.

Stronger responses included a discussion of the environmental, economic and social effects and impacts on Country A where realistic data was included to support examples. In contrast, several candidates provided death tolls as over a half a million in a single disaster.

Discerning candidates identified a higher death toll with reasons such as a night time event, urbanised locations and use of poor quality building materials. Lower death tolls and injuries were put down to the crisis being focused on rural and remote locations and/or preparedness of Country A. Economic impacts were discussed, as a destruction of resources, be it in primary, secondary or tertiary sectors.

Stronger answers discussed a decline in tourist numbers and associated flow on effect. Secondary impacts were also present in stronger responses. Examples included the outbreak of disease and lack of access to fresh water and food shortages.

It is important that candidates read the questions carefully to ensure that they provide the information required by the specific question. Unfortunately some candidates did not attempt (b) at all.

AUSTRALIAN & INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

Responses here were mixed. As Section D was the final section for the exam, it was clear that some candidates were affected by time management and this aspect of the question was completed in a hurry without the necessary detail to address the question.

Because Australia was specifically mentioned, it narrowed the student focus of discussion. Responses that included the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) as the driver of the Australian response were stronger. Discussion that included neighbouring countries (Indonesia) and other developed countries (including Japan and Singapore) in addition to the Australian response showed good understanding of the nature of an international response. In addition to this the Asian Development Bank, the World Bank and an array of NGOs, including the Red Cross were of assistance to Country A's crisis. Some candidates found time to list a table with donors (both national and NGO) and their contribution to Country A.

Strong answers detailed specific roles of Country A's response teams, with the defence forces coordinating the immediate response within 24 hours of the event and with extra assistance (depending on the size of the event) coming in the first 7 days and then longer term relief efforts over the following months and years. Candidates also had specific roles for assisting countries and aid agencies ranging from technical assistance and rebuilding efforts to food and water provisions to search and rescue. Some answers provided political differences for some neighboring countries not assisting or providing minimal help.

Innovative candidates discussed marketing campaigns to get tourists back to Country A as soon as possible in order to begin an economic recovery.

ANALYSIS OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE RESPONSE

The analysis of the effectiveness was the most disappointing part of responses. Responses often provided a position of being effective without scrutinizing why it was so. Some candidates suggested reasons why the national and international response was poor and included why some aspects were handled badly. But overall, again, there was a general lack of scrutiny. Lack of coordination and communication were common themes for ineffective responses to the crisis. This part of the question was often overlooked as candidates had perhaps run out of time.