

Geography

Course Code: GGY315115

There were 180 candidates. Criteria 3, 4, 5 and 6 were assessed twice, on different questions. Candidates need to perform consistently in all 4 sections of the examination and satisfy the requirements of the criteria in each question to achieve the best possible overall award. It is important that candidates read the instructions carefully so that they answer all of the required questions. There were four sections in the examination with eight questions in total to be answered. Some candidates answered more than the one essay question required in Section D which impacted on them negatively. It is also recommended that candidates keep to the suggested time allocations on the examination paper and that each question is answered to the best of the candidate's ability. Where there are a number of parts to a question, recommended times are given.

Candidates need to number the questions clearly and accurately on both the outside and inside of their answer booklets to avoid confusion in the marking process. Candidates must answer each question in a separate booklet. Candidates should also ensure that their handwriting is legible so that they can be given full credit for everything that they write.

Section A

Students were asked to use a separate answer booklet for each question. It was recommended candidates spend 45 minutes on this section.

Question 1

This question assessed Criterion 4. It was recommended that candidates spend 25 minutes on this question. It required candidates to refer to the Information Sheet (Coloured World Map) and the Data Sheet: World Population (2015).

- (a) This question required candidates to identify the most densely populated regions of the world and explain the key physical and human factors that have contributed to this. Many candidates correctly identified India and China as being densely populated. However, many tended to only write their response focusing on these two countries. Better answers acknowledged there were distinct clusters and referred to regions such as South Asia, South East Asia, Europe, East Coast of America and West Africa. These responses also identified countries within these regions like China, Japan, India, Nigeria.

The physical factors which candidates could have referred to include climate, relief, soil fertility/river valleys, access to the sea. Human factors include infrastructure, urbanisation, historical and employment opportunities. Better responses were able to attribute specific factors to specific regions.

- (b) This part of the question required candidates to name regions of the world that are sparsely populated and to explain the reasons for this. Most candidates were able to identify Northern America, Russia, Greenland and inland Australia. Factors that were mentioned varied, the better responses detailed the effects of climate and relief, mountainous, desert, polar, too hot/too cold, too dry/ too wet and why these were unfavourable conditions for supporting human populations.

Although candidates were required to refer to the Information Sheet and the Data Sheet in answering the question. Very few candidates used the Data Sheet effectively, if at all. It would have been appropriate to use the Data Sheet for the world's population, the percent of urbanisation, the specific population of certain countries/regions.

Candidates need to ensure they are familiar with differences between continents, regions and countries and when referring to these to ensure they use a capital letter.

Better responses were able to correctly include key terms like: density, sparsely populated, ecumene, non-ecumene, void.

Question 2

This question assessed Criterion 6. It was recommended candidates spend 20 minutes on their response. It required candidates to discuss two challenges facing rural and remote places in Australia.

The most common challenges selected were:

- declining populations
- loss of services
- ageing populations
- issues relating to healthcare and education
- lack of job opportunities

Better answers provided a brief outline of the chosen issues with reference to some examples from rural and remote locations. In answering part (b) again better answers made reference to specific strategies being implemented at the local, state and/or national level. Weaker answers were those that were very generalised and failed to provide specific examples and detail. Strategies such as 'create more jobs' and 'build more hospitals' were not sufficient to achieve the higher ratings.

The use of statistics relating to life expectancy, suicide rates, school retention and so on added value to answers.

Section B

Candidates were asked to use a separate answer booklet for each question. It was recommended candidates spend 45 minutes on this section.

Question 3

This question assessed criterion 4. It was recommended that candidates spend 25 minutes on their response.

The first component of this question required candidates to outline the key causes of anthropogenic climate change. The majority of candidates provided a definition for anthropogenic climate change (e.g. 'human induced climate change'). However, many failed to demonstrate a clear understanding of the process of anthropogenic climate change. Many candidates only listed the key causes as the burning of fossil fuels, transport, animal agriculture, industrialisation, etc. The best responses were those that elaborated on these factors, explaining how human activity is enhancing the processes that cause a change in climate. Candidates were rewarded for the use of key terms such as 'natural greenhouse effect', 'enhanced greenhouse effect', 'solar radiation', as well as listing key greenhouse gasses and their origins.

The second component of the question required students to describe some of the consequences of anthropogenic climate change for the world's people and environments, using examples from More Developed Countries (MDCs) and Less Developed Countries (LDCs). Responses were varied in both depth and examples. Common consequences mentioned by candidates were sea level rise, coral reef loss and degradation and glacier and ice sheet retraction.

It was common for candidates to correctly identify specific consequences of anthropogenic climate change, but to list their causes as direct human actions (e.g. desertification is the results of overgrazing, coral reef loss is the result of overfishing, etc.) The best responses were those that made explicit links between the causes, consequences and processes of anthropogenic climate change. In addition, the stronger responses provided detailed explanations of the environmental and social consequences of anthropogenic climate change, including specific examples and relevant statistics.

Future candidates should be instructed to avoid dramatic language and the overuse of hyperbole. Comments such as 'the end of the world as we know it', 'extinction of life on Earth is imminent', etc., were common and

detracted from students' ability to demonstrate a well-informed, detailed response.

Question 4

This question assessed criterion 5. It was recommended that candidates spend 20 minutes on their response. Candidates were required to use specific examples from a More Developed Country (MDC) and a Less Developed Country (LDC) to describe the nature and consequences of one form of direct human action that is changing land cover.

Generally, this question was answered poorly with few candidates providing sufficient depth and detail to achieve an 'A' rating.

Various forms of direct human actions were mentioned, with deforestation, mining and soil and land degradation being the most popular. The best responses were those that demonstrated an understanding of the nature of the particular direct human action i.e. What is it? Why does it occur (key drivers)? and How is it undertaken?

When discussing consequences, the best responses demonstrated an understanding of land cover being the biophysical environment (water, soil, vegetation, rock, ice etc.). Candidates were rewarded for explaining how their chosen form of direct human action is affecting land cover. Weaker responses failed to demonstrate an understanding of land cover, dwelling on consequences such as loss of habitat for orang-utans etc.

In addition, candidates were rewarded for providing examples with an understanding of geographical context. For example, the best responses referred to examples such as 'desertification is occurring in the Sahel region of central Africa', rather than simply stating 'Africa is experiencing desertification'.

A large number of candidates discussed two forms of direct human actions instead of one form of direct human action this detracted from the level of detail these candidates could then provide in 20 minutes.

As with question 3, the use of dramatic language should be avoided. Statements such as 'human activity is changing the world's land cover and will continue to do so until there is no world left to change' are not recommended.

Finally, candidates were rewarded for using and referring to relevant statistical data as supporting evidence in their response.

Section C

Candidates were asked to use a separate answer booklet for this section. It was recommended candidates spend 45 minutes on this section.

This section assessed criteria 3 and 5.

Question 5

It was recommended that candidates spend 15 minutes on this question.

In most cases the definitions of globalisation were vague and tended to only mention a single aspect of globalisation such as economic globalisation. Better responses considered multiple aspects of globalisation in their definition and used appropriate terminology such as 'liquidity', 'barriers', 'interconnection' etc.

Most responses were able to clearly identify two factors/drivers of globalisation. The most common factors discussed were technology and transport. Some candidates chose politics, culture and the economy as drivers of globalisation.

Whilst not required in the question, better responses tended to also include clear examples of their chosen factors and discussed how they have enhanced the process of globalisation. Some common examples used were containerisation, aviation and the internet.

Question 6

It was recommended that candidates spend 15 minutes on this question.

Most answers made a clear choice of referring to either a transnational corporation (TNC) or an international trade/security agreement. Those candidates who referenced both a TNC and an international agreement were generally unable to answer the question in sufficient depth to address the criteria. Some of the choices for TNCs included McDonalds, Coca Cola, Nike, Adidas, Starbucks, Microsoft, Apple and Samsung.

Some of the choices for international agreements were the European Union (EU), Association of South-eastern Asian Nations (ASEAN), North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP), United Nations (UN) and Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC). Whilst most organisations that were chosen were appropriate, some candidates had difficulty describing the impact of the organisation on Less Developed Countries (LDCs). The most common impacts described were the boost in economic opportunities for LDCs and the exploitation of workers in LDCs. Strong responses tended to elaborate or expand on these two main points. Better responses used subject specific terminology.

Question 7

It was recommended that candidates spend 15 minutes on this question.

This question gave candidates a good scope to demonstrate their learning of the economic ascent of China and India as well as the relative economic decline of Europe and the United States. Candidates tended to mention at least one country or region with an improving economy.

Some candidates highlighted that whilst the U.S and European economies are still increasing, the rate of growth is lower than that of India and China.

The description of global economic shifts was often based on industrialisation and the shift from primary industry to secondary industry. The Global Financial Crisis was also mentioned to describe the slowing of the global economy and more specifically, the U.S.A.'s economy. Population demographics, TNCs and trade agreements were used to describe the reasons for increasing secondary and tertiary industries in Asia and specifically in India and China.

Section D

Candidates were asked to answer one question from Section D in essay form. In a separate booklet. This section assessed Criteria 3 and 6.

Although it was clearly stated that only one question was to be answered from Section D there were five candidates who misinterpreted the instructions at the top of the page and wrote shortened essays on Question 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12. Two candidates did more extensive answers to Questions 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12. This would have impacted negatively on the time spent on other sections of the exam.

Question 8

The question assessed criteria 3 and 6.

Overall the standard of the essays was good. With a choice of five essays in Section D Question 8 was chosen by over sixty-five percent of candidates. Of the five choices of essays drawn from the depth studies within the course this essay question was probably the most predictable. It was obvious many candidates had been prepared for this question and presented well-structured essays with relevant information to back up their arguments.

A large variety of megacities were chosen to explain the challenges and possible solutions facing large urban areas in developing countries. Mumbai, Dhaka, Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo were the most popular. Other megacities used as examples were Mexico City, Jakarta, Shanghai, Beijing, Manila, Istanbul, New Delhi, Buenos Aires, Tehran, Shanghai, Johannesburg and Karachi. Major challenges facing these megacities ranged from rapidly expanding populations, inadequate housing, ad hoc development, lack of essential services, poor sanitation, disease and poor health services, water security, traffic congestion, public transport issues, air and water pollution, waste management, energy generation security, lack of social and cultural cohesion, lack of educational and employment opportunities, climate change and economic inequality.

The better answers defined a megacity city and included a brief description of the developing country in which their chosen city was located. Most candidates were able to adequately explain the causes of urbanisation – the better answers related the causes to the particular megacity they had chosen. The specific challenges facing the megacity were clearly outlined with supporting evidence/data. Examples of strategies used to address these challenges were explained in terms of sustainability and again the better answers used supporting evidence to assess the success or otherwise of these measures.

Although many candidates presented well-structured essays others were not as coherent or logical in developing their argument. Poorer answers contained little concrete detail to back up vague generalisations and opinions regarding the challenges facing megacities in the developing world and strategies that could lead to longer term sustainability.

Question 9

This question assessed criteria 3 and 6.

22 Candidates choose this question. Coral reef loss and/or degradation and rising sea levels were the most popular choices followed by glacier and ice sheet retraction only one candidate chose desertification. Once again overall the standard of the essays was very good.

Candidates were required to discuss how anthropogenic climate change is contributing to their chosen topic. They were also asked to describe some of the impacts on people and their environments and to discuss some strategies that are being implemented to address the consequences. They were also asked to assess the outcome of these actions over time.

The best responses were well written, had a clear structure and covered all components of their chosen topic and included detailed evidence, data and specific examples and referred to local, regional and global scale.

Some candidates used a large section of their response describing their chosen topic (for example glaciers and ice sheet retraction) rather than addressing the question by discussing the contribution of anthropogenic climate change (such as thermal expansion) and the various impacts this has on environmental, economic and social factors of the topic. This resulted in a limited response to the question.

The best responses gave exact geographical locations for coral reefs, using geographic terminology e.g. (Coral reefs are located in tropical and subtropical regions, 25 degrees North and 25% South of the equator) and used specific examples of places impacted by coral reef loss and/or degradation such as: Australia (The Great Barrier Reef), Indonesia, Jamaica, Kiribati and the Philippines. The impacts for this topic included: biodiversity loss, ocean acidification causing low calcification rates, increased ocean temperatures disrupting zone of habitation for coral, loss of food source for local communities, loss of tourism and coral bleaching. Strategies to address these impacts included: policies aimed at the reduction of global greenhouse gas emissions (mitigation of anthropogenic threats), the construction of sea walls and protected marine environments to limit the damage and diversification of food sources for local communities.

Some of the examples of places impacted by glacier and ice-sheet retraction included: Alaska, and Montana (USA), Antarctica, Greenland, Switzerland, Nepal and the Himalayas. The impacts for this topic included: flooding, loss of water source and impacts on biodiversity. Strategies for this topic included: policies aimed at the reduction of

global greenhouse gas emissions, artificial glaciers, relocation of impacted communities, building barriers to prevent flooding, using reflective tarps to reduce solar radiation, and using alternative water sources.

Some of the examples of places impacted by rising sea levels included: The Netherlands, Bangladesh, Tuvalu, Venice (Italy), New York (USA) London (England) and New Orleans (USA). The impacts for this topic included: flooding; increased salinization of cropping land and fresh water; coastal erosion; infrastructure damage; displacement of entire communities and countries (Climate refugees); health impacts; and greater impact from storm surges and high tides. Strategies for this topic included: The use of physical barriers to prevent storm surges such as flood gates; land reclamation; relocation to unaffected regions; reduction of greenhouse gas emissions through policies such as the carbon tax or trading systems; the transition from a greenhouse-intensive carnivorous diet to a vegetarian or vegan diet and renewable energy targets to replace burning of fossil fuels.

Solutions to address impacts of climate change included: global initiatives such as the establishment of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the Kyoto Protocol. Local and personal actions included reduction of energy use and using renewable energy sources.

Question 10

This question assessed criteria 3 and 6.

16 Candidates chose this question.

There was a range of topics chosen by candidates including deforestation, mining, intensification of agriculture, land and soil degradation and urban expansion. The best responses included the negative environmental impacts of the chosen topic. They were also able to discuss a program which has been used to restore and/or rehabilitate the land affected, including replanting programs and land reclamation programs. A range of environmental, economic and social costs and benefits were mentioned. Better answers were able to evaluate the success of the suggested program in terms of future sustainability.

Question 11

This question assessed criteria 3 and 6.

Once again only a small number of candidates (2) chose to answer this question. The activities chosen were Uber and coffee. Candidates were able to describe the changing distribution of production and consumption of the activity. Responses would have been enhanced if a greater range of examples from various countries and regions were used as supporting evidence. Both candidates were able to discuss some of the social and economic implications of the changes to production and consumption for their particular topic. Candidates also needed to include in their responses evidence of the political implications of the changes to production and consumption of their chosen commodity. This aspect was not covered very well and future candidates need to ensure they are informed in this area.

Question 12

This question addressed criteria 3 and 6.

Eighteen candidates chose this question, topics included music, fashion, sport, architecture, religion and language.

Candidates were asked to choose one element of culture and describe the geographical extent and the pattern of distribution of that element. The best responses used specific examples with reference to advances in technology, transport, communication and the media. Candidates were also asked to predict how this might develop in the future. The best responses provided an overview of the current global context of their chosen cultural element and then discussed the influence of each process or driver in turn. Weaker responses repeated some explanation of the processes creating overlaps, such as with communication and technology.