



A LEVEL GEOGRAPHY

7037/1 Physical Geography
Report on the Examination

7037
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General Introduction to the November Series

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

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

Overview of Entry

The entry consisted of 111 students comprising either private students or those wishing to improve upon the centre assessed grade awarded in Summer 2020.

The standard of work seen was a little lower than in previous series. The highest quality of work (usually scoring over 100 marks out of the 120 available) was not evident in this series. Similarly the average mark on the paper was down by over 10 marks compared to a typical full cohort entry.

The cohort did not generally appear to be as well prepared as is normally the case. Basic misunderstandings were evident on AO1 questions. For example on the coasts unit, students confused weathering and erosion and in many cases could not expand their answers appropriately.

The skills questions differentiated well with many utilising the data provided to make sound analytical points. Those who drifted into reasons for patterns usually scored low marks for failing to respond accordingly and not demonstrating the necessary AO3 skills.

Similarly, on the AO1/AO2 novel situations (with resources), some students scored really well by applying their knowledge to the unseen resource. More limited responses failed to engage with the resource and also spent too long analysing data.

Those who prepared well did produce some strong answers especially on the 20-mark extended responses.

Comments on Individual Questions

Water and Carbon

This question differentiated well overall. There were no significant issues with Q1.1 or Q1.2. In Q1.3 too many tried to analyse the data presented rather than consider the implications of the expected drier conditions on life in the region. The essay Q1.4 posed no major problems with most considering positive and negative feedback caused by modern agricultural practice, deforestation and use of agricultural machinery. It was good to see some consider the positive impacts of more sustainable farming practices on the carbon budget.

Coastal systems and landscapes

Many struggled to see the link between weathering and coastal landscape development, often confusing this with erosional processes. In Q3.3, most identified that it was an arch but did not get much beyond processes in the development of an arch. This only constituted AO1 and AO2 marks could not be awarded. More focus was needed on the high energy environment and other evidence in the photograph. On the extended 20 mark response Q3.4, many had evidently learned about coastal management and simply regurgitated this material and it was difficult to see the tangible link to the question. Some did incorporate management into their response by linking this to the mitigation of the predicted impact of climate change. This was a more effective approach.

Glacial systems and landscapes

Students either knew or did not know the term nivation (Q4.1). Those that did, could comfortably access marks for this AO1 question. For the novel situation presented in Q4.3, students needed to understand the factors leading to the development of tundra. This was not a well answered question because those factors were not clearly demonstrated and applied. For the extended response Q4.4, whilst alternative possible futures is clearly identified in the specification, many responses offered only a limited future focus.

Hazards

It was surprising to see so many students confuse liquefaction (Q5.1) with processes taking place in the mantle, as opposed to a hazard arising out of seismic activity. Those that understood the hazard were able to outline the process with relative ease. For the skills question (Q5.2), a lot of data was provided. The quality of analysis seemed to suffer when students tried to engage with too many aspects of the data. For these question types, students are advised to ascertain overall trends, offer some calculations, consider links between data sets and pick out anomalies. These are the main routes to credit. On Q5.3, the novel situation posed was generally not well addressed. The focus of the question was on the issues associated with managing the event in question, yet many tried to summarise the data without considering this key element. On Q5.4 most understood that this was about comparing earthquakes and tsunamis. Those who offered detailed support to substantiate their position generally scored well. For the extended response most understood the implicit link between climate change and increased impact of tropical storms and wildfire. Most agreed with the direction of the question, but not all responses were well supported.

Concluding remarks

It was pleasing to award a number of students high grades on this paper. Despite the fact that overall students generally performed less well than a typical full cohort entry, there were still a substantial number of top grades awarded.

In summary students still need to understand the difference between resources testing skills and those requiring the application of knowledge to novel situations.

In more extended responses, students must use their knowledge to answer the question set. Those who remain focused on the question with strong knowledge always score the highest marks.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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