A LEVEL

GEOGRAPHY

7037-2 Human 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 was very variable. although the full spread of ability was seen, the entry was overall weaker than a normal entry, reflected in a lower mean score. The paper differentiated well and allowed well prepared students to show and apply their knowledge.

This being the third series in the current specification meant that there was some experience of how to approach the different question types. However, there were still many students who were unclear as to how to address the AO3 questions requiring them to analyse data presented to them. The command 'analyse' in these questions simply required students to engage with the data and deconstruct it - looking for patterns and trends, analysing the connections both within figures and between figures where applicable. Students need to be encouraged to manipulate data rather than simply describing it, as this does not constitute analysis. Conversely on the AO1/AO2 questions using a resource presenting a novel situation, many students focus on analysing data rather than addressing the question asked and demonstrating their knowledge and understanding applied to novel situations.

Students generally seemed to manage their time effectively and there were only a very few students who seemed to have failed to complete the paper due to time constraints. With respect to the 20 mark essay questions, they need to be encouraged to address all parts of the question. Those who answer the question will generally gain at least level 3, whereas partial responses will score level 2 and very limited responses level 1. Very few students seemed to plan their responses and they should be encouraged to do so, constructing a brief plan in order that the response has a clear structure and argument.

Comments on Individual Questions

Section A – Global systems and global governance
Overall students achieved best outcomes in this in this question. In general, Q1.1 showed the importance of learning key terms. Those who understood the concept of differential access were able to apply their knowledge, gaining further credit for deeper understanding and exemplars. Students should be encouraged to used supporting examples throughout the paper. Q1.4 was the highest average scoring essay on the paper. More able students who had detailed knowledge of both TNCs and the UN were able to apply that knowledge the assess the relative success in

promoting growth and stability. Weaker responses frequently indicated lack of understanding of the demands of the question.

Section B – Changing Places
Responses to this section were very variable. Many students struggled with Q2.1 and Q2.4. The standard on Q2.1 was very weak. Many students did not know what geospatial data means. This meant they were then unable to suggest how it could be used to present place characteristics. Using different data sources to investigate and present place characteristics is an essential aspect of the specification and students should familiarise themselves with both quantitative and qualitative sources in studying place. In Q2.2 students often engaged well with the two data sources and were able to make clear connections between the pattern of violent crime in each area and the perception. Weaker students tried to explain the links and strayed from the focus of AO3. Q2.4 was the cross-specification question where students were asked to apply knowledge from the *Global systems and global governance* unit to *Changing places*. Many students were able to do this successfully, drawing on their knowledge of factors in globalisation and applying it to their distant place. Supervising teachers should be reminded that place selection is the key to success. Students perform better where they have investigated the place chosen in depth either through fieldwork or secondary research. Scale of place is critical and studies of an area of a city such as Stratford are often more manageable and provide better outcomes than whole cites such as London. Some students produced very limited responses as they didn't identify a distant place and instead chose a TNC or a whole country such as China. This is a good example of where students need to consider the question carefully and plan before launching into their response.

Section C
Question 3 was the most popular option and question 5 the least popular, following similar trends seen in previous series. There was no significant variation in the performance of each question.

Question 3 – Contemporary Urban Environments
This was the most popular option with about 50% choosing it. As with the core units, there was wide variability in the responses and the questions clearly differentiated. As with Q1.1 and Q2.1, students must be encouraged to use examples to support their points in Q3.1. Where this was done, students often were able to access the full mark range. The London congestion charge was a popular choice but students could have chosen any type of pollution reduction policy, for example a recycling scheme would have been creditworthy. Some students failed to read the question carefully and produced responses evaluating the policies, rather than outlining how the policy was implemented. Q3.3 responses were frequently of a low standard. Students often had a poor understanding of the term 'urban form'. The question asked them to use Figure 6 and their own knowledge, allowing them to refer to urban form in cities other than Plymouth. However, very few chose to do this. There were some very good responses to Q3.5. Some of the best responses assessed the opportunities brought about by river restoration projects such as the Cheonggyecheon in Seoul or specific SUDs and then compared this to the challenges of managing flood risk in cities, leading to unsustainable practices. Weaker responses were typified by a lack of specific examples and a reliance on generic knowledge of sustainable cities.

Question 4 – Population and environment
Q4.1 differentiated very well. Better responses showed a good understanding of the link between health and the physical environment of the local area, using specific place detail to support and develop their points. Q4.3 is a good example of where students need to be prepared for the different demands of assessment objectives and question types. Students were required to apply their knowledge of the political issues of migration to the data shown in the figures. Many students

failed to do this and instead analysed the spatial variation in numbers of refugees. Better responses used the data and link to the rise of anti-immigration parties as people blamed refugees for unemployment and conflict in the host countries. They then went on to consider that differing viewpoints on immigration often led to political tension with many using their own knowledge of UK politics to exemplify this.

This is a good example of where those students who go beyond typical textbook content, to explore ideas in more depth and gain up-to-date knowledge are then able to use this in examination questions to great effect. Q4.5 showed large variation in quality of responses. Many students had good knowledge and understanding of the distribution and causes of diseases but were less well-prepared for how these diseases are managed. This led to partial, descriptive responses lacking in evaluation. The best responses featured comparative evaluations of the effectiveness of management strategies using place at a variety of scales. For example, some looked at the effectiveness of the '5-a-day fruit and veg' campaign in the UK compared to managing Zika virus in Brazil, whilst others compared the effectiveness of strategies to manage asthma and malaria in HICs versus LICs. These were equally valid approaches.

Question 5 – Resources

Q5.2 differentiated well. The more able looked for patterns of different minerals and the relationship with rock type, often grouping them into the three types rather than simply taking each colour in the key. In this way they were able to delve deeper into the analysis of the connections. Weaker responses tended to make broad generalisations that frequently lacked accuracy, such as 'no minerals are found in the Permian and Triassic rocks, whereas all the Baryte is found in metamorphic rocks'. Q5.4 required students to assess the relative importance of climate and geology in the supply of water. All too frequently, they were only able to refer to climate. This very much limited them to level one marks. Whilst there is no requirement for an even balance, there must be a discussion of both to engage with relative importance. Where students 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. Whilst there was no requirement to do so, the better responses used a place example to exemplify their points, with Mexico City being a popular choice. This confirms that supervising teachers should encourage students to support answers with specific learnt examples where they can do so.

Concluding Remarks

Overall outcomes compared favourably with previous papers and it was clear that students, on the whole were prepared for its demands. Any weaknesses in exam technique and specification knowledge may have been due to the long lag between regular taught lessons and the exams. On a more positive note it was frequently evident that a lot of revision and preparation had taken place, particularly in terms of the depth of knowledge that some students were able to demonstrate. This was very evident in Changing Places on Q2.4 – some students were able to discuss their distant place in great depth, supported by a wide range of data sources. It was a delight to examine such responses and supervising teachers should be commended for choosing such a diverse range of places and fully engaging their students in the themes of changing places. It was obvious that some students had invested a lot of time in the study of their chosen place. Going forward, students need to ensure that they are able to differentiate between the 6 mark AO3 questions and the 6/9 mark AO1-AO2 questions using a resource exploring novel situations. They should practise these in their centres. Where they are asked to use their 'own knowledge', they should ensure they do so, bring in other examples or applying what they know to the resource.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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