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Examiners' Report

June 2010

GCSE Geography 5GB3F

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Introduction

It was very pleasing to see a good standard of responses from candidates for this first session of the new modular examination. Uniquely, the majority of candidates - if not all - were from Year 10, yet were being assessed at GCSE standard. Teachers in centres had been asked to make early judgments about whether to enter candidates for Foundation or Higher Tiers, and it is to be expected that many candidates who sat this examination in this session will be entered for Higher Tier in future. Certainly, against an expected lack of maturity of writing style, most candidates acquitted themselves very well indeed. Some of the writing for extended questions of 6 or 9 marks was really very good; one of the Team Leaders commented about 2 candidates that the standard would be acceptable for an AS examination.

There was generally a strong level of knowledge about Australia, and the Resource Booklet seems to have been used well in preparing candidates, which is very pleasing. There was evidence of linkages with work covered in Units 1 and 2, with references both in this examination, as well as those for Units 1 and 2 - of students linking what is taught in one topic with another. This was one of the original purposes in developing this specification, and it is pleasing that teachers are encouraging candidates to make such links. Several more able candidates had made links to the ideas of Malthus and Boserup, and discussed these in Questions 2(c), 2(d), 3(a) and 3(b). This too is heartening, since the specification was designed to draw candidates away from a dependency upon case studies and towards an understanding of geographical concepts.

Teachers should therefore be confident that candidates in a great number of centres are being prepared fully for the examination, and that some of their candidates are capable of writing at length and in depth. This is pleasing, since the examination asks questions about 'big' topics. Many candidates were capable of writing at a mature standard about issues concerning Australia's future population levels; no small matter, since some candidates will have been just 14 at the time of the examination. It is therefore hoped that those teachers who are unsure about whether candidates should be entered in Year 10 for modular examinations will take confidence from results during this cycle, and be prepared to enter candidates in future.

Nonetheless, in Foundation Tier particularly, there was some evidence of candidate fatigue; some candidates did not attempt all questions, not necessarily the final question. Teachers are encouraged to do all they can to ensure candidates go into the examination with the aim of completing it. Even brief attempts at questions can be rewarding. Shorter questions early in Sections A and B do not necessarily require full sentences; candidates who, for question 1(c) wrote, 'Forest' for photograph A were credited with a mark, just as if they had written a full sentence.

Question 1(b)

This question is typical of a number which emphasise how important careful preparation is for this examination. The Resource Booklet (page 5) listed several indicators about Australia's economy. Nonetheless, not all are 'typical' indicators of a high income country, and teachers needed to help candidates understand how the data about Australia compare to other countries in the world. For instance, Australia's infant mortality is one of the world's lowest. It is reasonable to ask candidates about the relative importance of the data, as well as expect them to be able to comprehend what is in the Resource Booklet. The three correct options (Its GDP has more than doubled since 1989, Mining earns Australia more overseas income than farming, Its wine industry is booming) could be read from the booklet; however, the first statement about infant mortality required some understanding of whether Australia's level is high or low.

Question 1(c)

There was a clear distinction between candidates who knew the word 'vegetation' and those who did not. The term 'vegetation' is clearly not familiar to many F Tier candidates, in spite of its use in the Resource Booklet. Many wrote about anything but vegetation - landforms, weather etc. By contrast, the link between rainfall and plant growth was widely recognised throughout the examination. It seems as though candidates were very well prepared for the concepts explored in the booklets, but some terminology may be problematic. Centres are reminded that the italicised terms in the Resource Booklet are central to the issue.

(c) Look at Figure 5 (page 9) in the Resource Booklet.

State **one** fact about the vegetation shown on photograph **A** and **one** fact about the vegetation shown on photograph **B**.

(2)

A there is lots of vegetation, there are lots of big trees. gets alot of water
 B Its more arid tha A but can still grow trees and plants but not in large numbers,



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Examiner Comments

A good answer which shows both density of vegetation and type (trees) in part A, and draws a valid comparison in B.

(c) Look at Figure 5 (page 9) in the Resource Booklet.

State **one** fact about the vegetation shown on photograph **A** and **one** fact about the vegetation shown on photograph **B**.

(2)

- A The vegetation shown on this photograph is *high hills* and
lots of trees covering the area
- B The vegetation shown on this photograph is *flatland* and less trees covering
the area



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Examiner Comments

This answer gets its marks by mentioning trees in each part, so it is awarded the marks, but the candidate includes comments about how hilly or flat the landscape is, suggesting that s/he doesn't fully understand 'vegetation'.



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Examiner Tip

Always go into the exam knowing the meaning of the italicised words; their sense and meaning is important. You don't need to rote learn every definition, though!

Question 1(d) (i)

This question produced a wide range of responses when combined with marks for 1(d)(ii) as a total out of 6. However, it was complicated by candidates who described how well the plants grew where rainfall was abundant in 1(d)(i), and who inter-changed the use of '(semi-) desert' as referring to either climate or vegetation type. Markers were instructed to be flexible across the two 3-mark questions; there were good explanations in 1(d)(i) about vegetation that it would have been churlish not to credit. Many candidates were able to describe rainfall distribution very well, and in spite of the command word 'describe' were able to explain the causes of this distribution.

(d) Look at Figure 5 (page 9) in the Resource Booklet.

(i) Describe the rainfall distribution shown on the map.

(3)

There is alot more rainfall towards the Coast of austrilla towards the east but moving in towards the centre the rainfall becomes less where the deserts are.



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Examiner Comments

This answer gets 3 marks for making 3 points - identifying more rainfall towards the coast, the reduced rainfall towards the centre, and the deserts.



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Examiner Tip

Remember that questions of 5 marks or less are normally point-marked, so if a question has 3 marks, try to give 3 points.

(d) Look at Figure 5 (page 9) in the Resource Booklet.

(i) Describe the rainfall distribution shown on the map.

(3)

The rainfall in Section A in the around the coastal areas of Queensland the rainfall is very high, up to 3200 millimeters per year. In Section B, in the centre of Queensland the rainfall is not as much as Section A but there is still some, around about 600 millimeters per year. In Section C, South Australia, there is very little rainfall, around 200-0 millimeters per year.



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Examiner Comments

This is a classic good answer; the candidate uses data to identify points.



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Examiner Tip

Illustrating your answer with data will always earn you marks!

Question 1(d) (ii)

Like 1(d)(i), this question proved to be a good discriminator when combined with marks for 1(d)(i) as a total out of 6. For many candidates, it was the chance to gain marks by developing answers e.g. 'Rainfall decreases as you go inland (1) until it is desert (1) where there isn't enough water for trees to survive (1)'. Candidates should be encouraged to develop answers in this way, as it is a certain way of gaining credit. Most candidates understood the question clearly, and so some skill in developing answers like this would help raise achievement levels.

(ii) Suggest why there are no trees shown in photograph C.

(3)

There is no trees shown in photograph C. because this land is desert land which will mean there is little rain fall here and alot of sun, this will make the land very dry and will make it very hard for anything to grow here.



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Examiner Comments

This shows a further way in which candidates earn 3 marks, by developing an answer. The development here shows how little rainfall makes the land dry which makes it hard for anything to grow.



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Examiner Tip

Use connecting phrases like 'which leads to', 'which makes', 'or and therefore ...' to explain points and develop your answer.

Question 1(e)

This question was generally done well. Most candidates understood at least some basic reasons why there were settlements in central Australia. Mining was most commonly cited, with high quality answers explaining how this could lead to the availability of jobs, and therefore the growth of towns to which people would move. High quality answers like this can gain 4 marks even if outlined as a single factor. Candidates should be prepared for the examination by understanding how to develop points in order to gain further credit.

(e) Living in central Australia can be very difficult, even so, there are a number of settlements.

Outline **two** reasons why there are some settlements in central Australia.

(4)

- 1 So people can get from one side to another ~~and~~ and have a break, e.g. Going from Port Augusta to Darwin you can stop of at Alice Springs
- 2 Also if people didnt live in more central area of ~~A~~ Australia it will be ~~a~~ hard ~~was~~ for people to find people to work for mining companies as it shows in figure 2.



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Examiner Comments

This is an excellent answer, with two developed points. The first part of the answer uses 'e.g.' to get a second mark; the second uses the example of mining companies to emphasise a point.



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Examiner Tip

Examples are a good way to pick up a second mark, by illustrating a statement.

Question 2(a) (i)

This question was generally done well, though some candidates were clearly at a disadvantage in plotting and drawing the graph freehand without the use of a ruler. Encourage candidates to come fully prepared to the exam, with everything they will need.

Question 2(b) (i)

This question was generally done well, though conceptually some students find it difficult to think of settlements in terms of their development and growth, preferring instead to think only of contemporary factors. Many used the relationship between population density or urban growth and rainfall; several used the development of ports / trade and therefore jobs in some well developed answers; a very few referred to historical reasons and European landings. Many more referred to contemporary factors such as coastalisation, which technically does not explain why most of the large cities are on the coast.

(b) Look at Figure 6.

(i) Give **two** reasons to explain why all of Australia's large cities are on the coast.

- 1 It is easier to ship goods out to other countries. (2)
- 2 ~~less~~ Will not get any water shortages because rainfall is high on the coast.



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Examiner Comments

Two clearly made points make this a very good excellent answer.



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Examiner Tip

Where questions give you two clear points to be made, write two separate clear sentences.

Question 2(b) (ii)

Most candidates answered this correctly, using either drought or 'it's desert' as their answer.

(ii) Give **one** reason why population is declining in many rural areas of Australia.

(1)

As they are moving to coast "coastalisation"
because in the rural areas people are finding it
hard to farm with drought.



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Examiner Comments

Longer than it needs to be, this answer nonetheless makes the point about drought and its effects clearly.

Question 2(c)

Most candidates scored at least 1 mark here, noting the increase, with many exemplifying the increase with data, or giving a reason (e.g. later age of marriage). However, a significant number interpreted the question as being about population levels. This is surprising, given the emphasis in the Resource Booklet upon the ageing population in Australia.

1980 and 2009.

(2)

The change in average age
~~xxxx~~ has increased from
1980 and 2009 from being age 37 in
2009, up from ~~as~~ 29.4 in 1980.



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Examiner Comments

A good clear answer which spots the increased average age for 1 mark, and uses the data to illustrate the point for a second mark.



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Examiner Tip

Use the data in the Resource Booklet to help illustrate your answers.

Question 2(d)

Migration was well understood by almost all candidates, with 'C' grade candidates showing particular demonstration of knowledge and understanding of detail and of the reasons why Australian migration had changed. Many candidates scored well on this question.

(d) Outline the main features of the following types of migration.

(4)

1. Assisted passages

Assisted passages was up to the 1970s where U.K citizens would emigrate to Australia for just £10 per family this was known as the 'ten pound passage.'

2. Skills-based migration

Skills-based migration was since the 1970s where those who wanted to move had to pass a points-based skills test based on: Job shortages, educational qualifications, age and language.



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Examiner Comments

This is a very clear 4-mark answer; both parts are well illustrated with either the names of the period ('ten pound passage') and the time period (1970s), each with an outline description of what characterised each one.



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Examiner Tip

Where 4 marks are given, try and make 4 points; if the question is split, try making 2 separate points for each.

Question 2(e)

Most 'C' grade candidates scored at least 3 or 4 points on this item. Many weaker answers relied too heavily on simple 'lift', whereby material was described almost verbatim from the booklet, or who went for broad-brush sweep of all environmental problems. Stronger answers resulted when candidates developed an outline of at least 2 problems in detail, with the use of well developed statements (e.g. 'over-grazing by sheep or cattle leads to vegetation dying, which leads to soil erosion'), clearly expressed in their own words. In spite of substantial 'lift' in weaker answers, the question gave an opportunity for strong candidates to shine; they outlined a range of environmental problems with some skill, and developed some significant factors. The important advice for candidates here is that even a 6-mark question does not require every factor; the development of 2-3 factors, written in sequential statements which develop and exemplify, will earn 6 marks.

*(e) Australia has many environmental problems.

Using the resources on pages 16–24, outline these problems.

(6)

~~At~~ Australia has an unusual and fascinating biosphere (Living part of the Earth (animals + plants)). This is regarded as special. However, Australia has a fragile environment, and includes major global features. Fragile environments are easily disturbed, and with tourist levels rising, tourists are going to be 'disturbing' the environment. Some parts of Australia is rich in iron ore, this has to be quarried which leaves huge scars on the environment. Australia is a very dry country, so water supplies are limited. This sometimes causes people to dig huge holes in their back gardens to collect extra water. Farmers use spray irrigation to water their crops. This uses a lot of water. In forests, deforestation is causing soil ~~near~~ moisture levels to rise. Ground water collects up in pools and salts form on ~~from~~ the soil surfaces as water evaporates. This makes it difficult for plants to regrow unless they are salt-tolerant. Soil erosion happens when cows and sheep eat the grass and the grass roots die. Soil is exposed and wind and rain can erode it.

(Total for Question 2 = 18 marks)

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Examiner Comments

This is an excellent 6-mark answer. It contains several well developed points, which are required to meet level 3 in the mark scheme. The answer is written in the candidate's own words, and explains why particular problems exist.

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Examiner Tip

Avoid 'lifting' material word-for-word from the Resource Booklet; try to use your own words in explaining something. Link points together like this candidate has done to reach level 3.

Question 3(a)

In spite of the 9 mark loading, many candidates were clearly not fazed by being asked to write at length; the question structure with Advantages and Disadvantages helped to keep even weaker responses on track. Those who reached 8 or 9 offered some outstanding answers which were coherent and well-reasoned. Like Question 2(e), one of the main discriminators was the degree of 'lift' from the Resource Booklet. Most 'C' grade candidate scored 6 or above on this question, notwithstanding the time factor which led to a few rushed answers (often reflected in the use of bullet points). Weaker responses had 'lifted' material either from the option statements themselves or from the Resource Booklet, with no further comment. Some of the strongest responses came from candidates who had selected the more extreme Options (1 and 4); they showed a clear rationale that those who select e.g. Option 2 often did not. Some candidates who selected Option 2 believed that slow growth would help to preserve Australia's environments and resources, without realising that even reduced growth would further the degree of environmental damage unless checked. More able candidates wrote consistent arguments, and recognised weaknesses in their lists of disadvantages.

Question 3(b)

Several candidates were caught by timing, and were unable to complete this question, which is unfortunate as many others scored highly. 2 marks were awarded for correctly identifying one person who would agree and disagree respectively with the candidate's own opinion. A reason which was lifted largely by quoting that person's own words, without further rationale, earned 1 mark, with 2 marks going to candidates who were able to explain in their own words what each person was stating. Some candidates related their opinions to Malthus and Boserup; markers were instructed to accept this intelligent interpretation of the question, even though their ideas were not quoted on Figure 10 on page 15. Some candidates did well enough on this question to stage a late recovery in their overall mark.

*(a) Choose **one** option which **you** think would be best for Australia.

Option chosen: **A**

Explain the advantages and disadvantages of your option for Australia's environment and its people.

(9)

Advantages

The advantages would be that by having a larger population they could have more skilled people mining farming and it wouldn't take so long, and plus from a bigger population means more money from taxes which can be spent on health care and building more houses for people to live in, it would also mean more job opportunities for more people and would also mean a lot less waste land in the country and means more jobs and houses can be built. More people would mean more money and also from that money they can improve on there water shortages and build more water resources or desalination plants. The wine industry would expand and mining and also improve are links with China and India.

Disadvantages

The population could go up to much which would mean Australia would be packed and there would be alot of people homeless with out jobs.

This could go up from increase of people in country from people demanding higher paid wages, and could also mean australia has to much resources and no space to put them the crime rates would go up and would have ages to build such an economy.

(b) (i) Identify **one** person writing in Figure 10 (page 15) who is likely to **agree** with your chosen option.

Identified person Malcolm Fraser

Explain your choice.

(3)

because if australia actually maintain a population of 20 million people it would be remarkable but australia's population is always increasing and will do for a long time.

(ii) Identify **one** person writing in Figure 10 (page 15) who is likely to **disagree** with your chosen option.

Identified person Harry Recher

Explain your choice.

because if you stop having children (3),
 your economy will grow old and
 old people don't have to pay
 taxes which means construction
 will lose money from taxes and
 if you don't have enough children
 that will mean loss in jobs so more money
 because they might not work
 to

Total for Question 3 = 15 marks



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Examiner Comments

In spite of a rather rambling style, this candidate really understands the implications of Option 1. The response is entirely in the candidate's own words, and the economic multiplier effect is very clearly explained. Terminology is used (e.g. desalination) and there's a clear sense that this candidate knows their stuff. A very good level 3 answer, awarded 8 marks because of one or two points about writing style. The answers for 3b are very clearly explained



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Examiner Tip

- 1 Think through carefully the reasons why you are choosing a particular option, and explain them in your own words.
- 2 If, like this candidate, you find you have written 'Option A' instead of 'Option 1', don't worry; examiners clearly know which one you mean and will always mark on your side.

Paper Summary

The following points may prove helpful to teachers, both as feedback to candidates for this examination, and in advising candidates in future years:

- Questions of 5 marks or fewer are normally point-marked; those over 6 marks are levelled. Statements that make points clearly will be credited. However, one feature common to both point- and level-marked questions is the need to develop answers. Even where a question asks for two statements for 4 marks (e.g. in Question 1(e), markers are instructed to credit developed answers - e.g. 'Some towns are found where there are minerals (1) e.g. Kalgoorlie (1)'. 'Developed' answers might be achieved by using:

- a) Exemplification, in this case Kalgoorlie.
- b) Explaining consequences, using phrases such as 'so that', or 'therefore' - e.g. 'Some towns are found where there are minerals (1) e.g. Kalgoorlie (1) which offers jobs (1) so that people move there (1)'.

- In the latter case, 4 marks have been achieved within a single factor. The guidance points given in the structure of some questions is there to assist candidates; markers are instructed to credit fully developed answers even if it results in 4 marks being awarded for one developed factor.

For some candidates, the paper is demanding in the time allowed. That said, the majority of candidates completed the examination in the time available, including some very high quality candidates. It will help prepare candidates for future examinations if teachers:

- a) Practice timed answers with their candidates.
- b) Help to keep candidates focused on the requirements of questions.
- c) Remind candidates that copying out large chunks of the Resource Booklet is likely to be time consuming and only of limited value.

- The italicised terms are central to the issue in the examination. It is less important that students rote learn definitions than they understand their general meaning and sense. With over 40 italicised terms in the booklet, only a small proportion will be directly tested by definition, but examiners will expect to be able to use the terms in questions, and candidates be expected to use them as evidence towards the assessment of Quality of Written Communication (QWC), of which geographical language and terminology is an important element.

- Many candidates wrote at length, but 'lifted' material direct from the booklet. In both question 2(e) and question 3(a), several candidates simply wrote out material from the Resource Booklet, and gained few if any marks for doing so. Candidates who simply lift material verbatim from the booklet and no more (as opposed to using details as evidence) restrict themselves to level 1 in levelled mark schemes. By contrast, even brief but nonetheless focused answers of just a few lines were able to access at least the top of level 2. Encourage candidates to write less but in a more focused way directed at the question. As previously mentioned, this is also very time consuming.

- Teachers can certainly help to prepare candidates in developing reasoned answers for questions in Section C. It will always be the case that options in the Resource Booklet will form the focus for Section C in the examination. Pre-prepared answers are not helpful, because candidates may find the actual questions very different, but candidates who had practised reasoned and well-evidenced analysis of the options stood out. Similarly, teachers should not feel that there is any bias shown by the mark scheme towards particular options. All options were reasoned choices, each having its supporters in Australia itself; none was 'fictionalised' for the sake of the examination. Teachers can encourage candidates to take an individualised view, and discourage them from thinking that there is a 'right' and 'wrong' option. Some of the highest quality responses came from candidates who made strong cases for the more extreme choices (1 or 4).
- In the first examination cycle, it is only to be expected that Units 1 and 2 will take longer to teach than may eventually prove to be the case. In a small trial of one of the SAMS examinations for Unit 3, there was a direct correlation between the high standards reached by candidates' schools who had been asked to give up to 6 hours preparation time for the trial, and the much lower performances of those who had been given 1-2 hours. Edexcel will be offering training sessions during the coming year in enabling teachers to plan how to use preparation time appropriately.

Grade Boundaries

Grade	Max. Mark	C	D	E	F	G	U
Raw mark boundary	50	33	28	23	19	15	0
Uniform mark scale boundary	69	60	50	40	30	20	0

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