

2021 ASSESSMENT REPORT

GGY315120 – GEOGRAPHY

General Comments

There were 154 students. Criteria 3, 4, 5 and 6 were assessed twice, on different questions. Students needed to perform consistently in all four 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 students read the instructions carefully so that they answer all the required questions. There were four sections in the examination with eight questions in total to be answered. Again, it was pleasing to note that no students this year answered more than the one essay question required in Section D, which has impacted negatively on some students in the past.

It is highly recommended that students keep to the suggested time allocations on the examination paper and that each question is answered to the best of the student's ability. Where there are several parts to a question, recommended times are given.

Students 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. Students must answer each section in a separate booklet. In Section A, a separate answer booklet is required for each question in this section. Students should also ensure that their handwriting is legible so that they can be given full credit for everything that they write.

It is imperative that students read the questions carefully and respond accordingly, as it was clear that some had pre-prepared responses that did not always address the question.

Students should ensure their responses have correct spelling, use geographic terminology whenever possible and use capital letters for place names (continents, countries, and cities).

SECTION A

Question 1

This question assessed criterion 4

This section was compulsory. A total of 154 students attempted the question which was divided into two parts, A and B. Answers relied on description of a graph, "Proportion of World's Urban Population, 1950 to 2025 and application and analysis of data from The World Population Data Sheet, 2020.

It is recommended that sufficient time be allotted to both consideration of the graph and choice of statistics from the Data Sheet. Too many interpreted the graph as representing total population rather than urban while some choices of countries and statistics showed an overall lack of understanding of world geography.

Choices of country included St Lucia, Guadeloupe and Western Sahara, the last as an example of a country with a high urban per cent of population which of course it is but not for reasons directly relevant to the question. It is a good use of time to analyse what each question means and think about the best data which could be used in the answer.

Question 1 – Part A

Students were required to interpret the graph taking note of relevant points such as the percentage across the world since 1950 in 25-year stages for both More and Less developed regions. Statistics from the graph and even calculated from the graph should have been used in the answer. Best answers referred to the graph to back up their descriptions as this demonstrates understanding of the stimulus and application to the world.

Interpretation of the question was the key to success. The clear directive was to DESCRIBE the process of urbanisation. Many students wasted a lot of time explaining both the process, the reasons for it and why it happens in More and Less Developed regions. More relevant perhaps was how these changes are taking place, but these observations had to be used carefully. Any statements made should have been supported by quoting figures from the graph. Such observations should include that there has been a steady increase in the urban population percent since 1950 with the Less Developed Regions still less heavily urbanised but the gap is narrowing and at an increasing rate as each 25 years pass. This has obvious implications for the future with the trend proceeding more quickly.

A significant number of students seemed determined to explain the trends, for example a discussion of push/pull factors which added nothing to the answer, and it seemed they also had to include learnt data which would have been more relevant in Part b. Many demonstrated their knowledge of the Demographic Transition Model along with diagrams. Use of the Data Sheet to enhance answers could have included current % of figures of the population living in cities in the More and Less Developed regions. A mention of areas with cities of over one million inhabitants could have aided in ensuring that the question was answered in an appropriate fashion. Such evaluative terms such as greater, lesser, faster, or slower would have greatly enhanced answers.

Question 1 - Part B

Students were asked to name one More Developed Country (MDC) and one Less Developed Country (LDC) and state their percentage urban from the Data Sheet. Referencing the Data Sheet in this context is not required. The best choices showed significant differences. Better answers addressed this requirement quickly in their answer avoiding information such as the location of the country and its total population. The choice of countries was critical to success with those choosing countries/region about which they knew something being at a distinct advantage.

Here the term EXPLAIN is critical and it was important that the explanation be relevant to the level of development and thus the other chosen indices. Such indices which support the level of urbanisation could include GNI ppp. MDCs with a high level of GNI ppp can afford higher levels of education, health, and better infrastructure. Jobs tend to be higher paid and there is a higher level of technology. The opposite is evident in LDC's and chosen countries statistics should support the case with higher percent living in rural areas and to a large extent dependant on their agricultural production.

Other justifiable indices include Infant Mortality Rate which reflects health care both long and short term, education, especially of women, and diet and well-being. Birth Rate too reflects the status of women in a society and the need to have children as labour and to replace those who do not survive. Access to contraception is often not as good an indicator as women as well as men need to want to use such methods of planning families which are often quite accessible. Population per km² of arable land may not be a good indicator of wealth for example some stated that both the UK and Singapore had low statistics but then failed to justify the index as relevant to their argument. While it was implied that other countries such as Libya had a higher statistic and therefore could feed their population. Many such answers went round in circles, e.g., Canada has a high level of urbanisation therefore it is an MDC therefore it has a high level of urbanisation.

Some terms should be defined carefully. The word 'liveability' in relation to cities is a complex one and has some level of value judgements implied. Again, cross cultural application of values requires a significant level of care; for example, many students wrote about families in LDC's not being able to afford to move to the cities as the moving cost were prohibitive and they would not be able to afford a house big enough to house their family. Some students need to be sure what the migration index refers to as many thought it referred to rural to urban migration within a country.

House-keeping notes which were applicable throughout include - the use of unit is important for each index e.g., US \$50,000 or Migration rate is 14 ...? for Canada. Spelling place names correctly is important; among many which were spelt incorrectly were Fiji, Burundi, and Philippines despite each being on The Data Sheet. Unsupported value judgements such as 'the GNI is less than \$5000 which shows the economy is low' or 'in LDC's most of the people are too young to understand how jobs work' are unhelpful.

Best answers in both questions got directly to the point of the question, made their arguments over choice of countries and indices used succinctly with back up statistics and applied knowledge. This type of technique requires practice and deliberation.

Question 2

This question assessed Criterion 6

Question 2 - Part A

Students were required to select two demographic challenges that regional or remote parts of Australia are facing. Demographic challenges refer to challenges that are caused by population changes. It is important that students are able to make the link between the population of the region and how this has caused the challenge that it is facing. Some of the examples used include an ageing population which increases the need for healthcare; lack of services due to decline in population and therefore the viability of being able to maintain certain services within the community; and educational attainment which can be attributed to the decline in population and availability of education opportunities.

It was not appropriate to write about urban challenges as the question specifically asked for rural and/or remote challenges. Likewise, it was also incorrect to discuss environmental issues that rural/remote regions are facing as these are not demographic challenges.

Better responses were able to articulate their two chosen challenges and what has been the demographic cause of this challenge (most commonly due to decline in population). They were then able to provide specific examples as to where these challenges are occurring.

Question 2 - Part B

Students only needed to provide a solution for ONE of the challenges they had addressed. No extra credit was given for those that had provided two solutions. Some of the better responses referred to specific examples that are already being implemented. They were able to identify what the program was and how it is being implemented in a specific location.

Some students identified the closure of banking services as a challenge. While this is a challenge for rural and remote areas, students needed to link this to the decline in population rather than say it is due to internet banking. In some cases, students also stated that the cause of the challenge should also be the solution (i.e., internet banking has caused the decline in banks in rural areas and their solution to the problem is to encourage people to use internet banking.)

Question 2 - Part C

Students needed to evaluate their proposed solution from part b. An evaluation should include detail on how the solution will work overtime and not just in the short term. Some of the better responses were able to evaluate how effective these solutions have been and if they are likely to continue into the future.

Some weaker responses were vague and did not provide adequate information on what the solution was. These responses also lacked comment on the outcome of the solution over time.

SECTION B

Question 3

This question assesses criteria 4 and 5

It was recommended that students spend approximately 45 minutes on Section B (Questions 3 & 4).

The first part of this question required students to explain the key causes of anthropogenic climate change (ACC). Most students were able to provide a suitable definition of ACC and were able to distinguish the difference between human induced climate change and naturally occurring climate change. Many students were able to list the major causes as industrialisation, the burning of fossil fuels, deforestation, transport, animal meat production, intensive agricultural practices etc. The better answers explained these causes in a historic perspective with the Industrial Revolution, the exponential human population growth, the increase in global interconnectedness and consumerism over the last one hundred and fifty years.

The students with a good understanding of ACC were able to clearly explain what was meant by the Enhanced Greenhouse Effect and list the main greenhouse gases being generated by human activity. Some of the poorer responses demonstrated a lack of understanding of how the Greenhouse Effect moderated the earth's temperature and some even confused it with the hole in the ozone layer.

The second part of the question asked students to discuss important ways in which anthropogenic climate change is contributing to land cover change across the world. They were asked to refer to at least one More Developed Country and at least one Less Developed Country. The two most popular impacts on the environment cited were rising sea levels and coral reef loss. Some students described the impact of glacier retraction and ice sheet melting, desertification and extreme weather events. The Netherlands and the USA (Florida) were used as examples of MDCs impacted by rising sea levels. Bangladesh, the Maldives and Pacific Island nations were commonly used as examples of LDCs impacted by rising sea levels. Most students used Australia's Great Barrier Reef as an example of an MDC impacted by coral reef loss. Coral reef loss in the Philippines and some Pacific Island nations were used as examples of impacts in LDCs.

The better responses contained specific examples of the how ACC was contributing to a country's land cover. The rate and the extent of the impact on the physical environment were clearly outlined. Many students made specific references to the negative social and economic consequences of climate change. Even though the question did not specifically ask for the negative social and economic impacts these students were not necessarily penalised for this interpretation of the question.

Question 4

This question assesses criteria 4 and 5

It was recommended that students spend 45 minutes on Section B (Questions 3 & 4).

The first part of the question asked students to identify and describe how one human activity was directly creating land cover change in one country. Various forms of direct human activities contributing to land cover change were explained: deforestation, soil/land degradation, rangeland modification, mining and urban expansion. Deforestation was overwhelmingly the most popular activity. The Amazon Rainforest of Brazil and the tropical rainforests of Indonesia were the most popular locations used to explain the impact of deforestation.

The best responses were those that demonstrated an understanding of the nature of the direct human activity. The rate and the extent of the activity were clearly explained with statistical data to justify claims where appropriate. The better responses explained the environmental impacts of their chosen human activity: loss of biodiversity, increased soil erosion, silting of waterways, severe flooding and loss of soil fertility.

The second part of the question asked students to describe important social and environmental impacts of the activity. Some students struggled to adequately describe the social and economic consequences of their chosen human activity. Some of the main social consequences of direct human action land cover change mentioned were the loss of aesthetic and cultural values, restricted recreational use, traditional hunting, and food gathering areas destroyed and loss of plant and animal habitats and migratory corridors. Some of the economic consequences were loss of livelihoods/employment, loss of building materials, increase in infrastructure expenditure and decrease in tourism revenue.

SECTION C

This section assessed Criteria 3 and 5

- It was recommended students spent 45 minutes on this section.
- There were three questions in this section and all questions were compulsory.
- When responding to the questions in this section, it is advisable that students ensure they address each question and the criteria.
- Many responses failed to address the questions in this section and were unable to adequately satisfy the higher ranges of the criteria as a result.
- Some students only completed one or two of the questions from this section and were unable to adequately satisfy the higher ranges of the criteria as a result.
- Students should be aware of the spelling for their chosen examples, including capitalisation.
- Students should also know the differences between cities, countries, and continents.

Question 5

This question required students to define the term 'globalisation' and describe ways in which the process of globalisation is affecting the global community, both economically and socially.

Most responses included a definition of globalisation addressing the ways it affects the global community economically and socially, however, some responses gave a definition of globalisation that focussed on the economic aspects of the process, missing the opportunity to explain the social aspects of the process. The definition of globalisation provided as an appendix to the TASC course provides a starting point for students. Some students only referred to the economic aspects of globalisation, missing an opportunity to discuss the many other aspects.

Globalisation

In its broad sense, the term 'globalisation' refers to the diffusion of manufacturing, services, markets, culture, lifestyle, capital, technology and ideas across national boundaries and around the world. It also refers to the integration of these geographically dispersed economic and social activities. The particular character of individual countries, regions and even localities interact with the larger scale general processes of change to produce quite specific outcomes (P. Dicken - Global Shift, 1992)"

Commonly students referred to technology and transport advancements in their responses, however, some other equally relevant responses used discussions of global brands, TNCs, MNCs, and media ownership to discuss social and economic effects on the global community through the process of globalisation.

Weaker responses did not address the question when discussing advancements in technology and transport, only listing or re-telling changes from the past few decades.

It was common for responses to highlight the role of communication technologies such as the internet and satellites in enabling increase social interactions, with some also addressing the role of these technologies in e-commerce and economic aspects of globalisation.

A common transport element discussed was 'containerisation' and its role in global economics. Stronger responses highlighted their role in global value chains and the ongoing effects on economic processes, not just as a way of transporting goods.

Some other generalised statements included reference to the increase in passenger flights with introduction of the Boeing 747 and A380 making flights accessible to 'all socio-economic classes'. A large portion of the global population are unable to afford flights.

Stronger responses addressed the question and highlighted nuance in their understanding of the globalisation process by discussing the unevenness of the process and the different ways the global community is affected both socially and economically, not just those from More Developed Countries (MDCs).

The question asks for a description of the ways that the process is affecting the global community, not the ways that were affecting it. This distinction was missed with some students discussing historical advancements of global interconnectedness and failing to relate these to the present global community.

Question 6

This question required students to discuss how and why cities are major centres for social and economic change in the modern world and to refer to two major cities in their response.

Most students were able to identify two major world cities in their response to this question. The most common selections were London and New York with other commonly mentioned cities being Tokyo and Paris. Other frequently mentioned cities used were Shanghai, Hong Kong, Singapore, San Francisco, Dubai, and Los Angeles amongst others.

It is important to nominate cities rather than countries. Some incorrectly referred to China, India, and Japan as 'cities'.

Some students did not refer to examples of major cities and were unable to provide specific detail of 'how' and 'why' cities are major centres for social and economic change in the modern world, as a result.

Some responses referred to a number of landmarks or infrastructure of their chosen cities and how these attract global visitors but did not mention how these contribute to the city being a centre for social and economic change in the modern world as required by the question.

Some students identified two cities and wrote many factual statements, even quoting statistics, about the economic success, cultural diversity, technological innovations, and number of TNCs/MNCs without addressing the question by discussing how and why cities are centres for social and economic change, making it difficult for them to satisfy elements of the criteria.

Question 7

This question required students to describe current trends in economic and cultural power and influence with reference to both More and Less developed Countries of the world, whilst referring to specific countries and/or regions in their answer.

Most students referred to the rise in economic power of either China or India, as well as the relative decline of economic power of Europe or the United States of America. Some did so explicitly whilst others referred to the Group of 7 (G7) or Emerging 7 (E7) in their discussion of macroeconomic trends influencing the global economy. .

Some weaker responses used a considerable portion of their response time to this question outlining historical context of countries or listing economic credentials of a country before discussing the 'current trends' as required by the question.

Stronger responses also addressed the 'cultural power' aspect of the question with reference to 'soft' and 'hard' power, along with processes such as Americanisation and Westernisation when discussing the sustained cultural influence of Europe and the U.S.A on other regions of the world.

SECTION D

Question 8

This question assessed criteria 3 and 6

86 students chose this question.

Overall, the standard of the essays for this question was good and it was clear many students had prepared well for this topic. Conventional essay format and structure was consistent in most responses. The best responses included a clear and coherent introduction, clear delineation of ideas and themes into well-structured paragraphs, a logical flow of information and a well-reasoned conclusion. Students should be reminded that the use of headings and bullet points are not appropriate in this format. Once again, spelling was an issue in many essays. The most commonly mis-spelled words were 'pollution', 'vehicles', 'densely' and 'accommodation'. Students should also note that directions (north, south, east, west) do not require a capital letter, unless part of a proper noun.

The first part of this question asked students to explain why their chosen megacity has grown in recent decades. Most students completely ignored this element of the question. When it was addressed, many only discussed rural to urban migration and used only very generalised descriptions of push and pull factors. The best responses explained push and pull factors specifically related to their chosen megacity and did not ignore that a portion of the population growth is also occurring because of natural increase within the existing urban population. While a definition of urbanisation was not required, those that were able to adequately define the process of urbanisation as the 'increase in the proportion of people living in towns and cities' were rewarded. It was clear from the essays that many students misunderstood the concept of urbanisation, incorrectly defining it as 'rural to urban migration'. The term 'urban' was also misunderstood by some students, with various references to 'urban cities', 'cities with a highly urban population' or 'unurbanised' areas.

The second part of the question asked students to select one megacity in a developing country and describe two challenges and two strategies. A number of megacities were chosen to describe/discuss/assess the challenges and possible solutions with Mumbai, Mexico City, Jakarta, Lagos, Rio de Janeiro, New Delhi, Sao Paulo and Dhaka being the most popular. Other megacities used as examples were Karachi, Kolkata, Cairo, Bangkok, Chennai, Manila, Lima and Kinshasa. Major challenges facing these megacities ranged from traffic congestion, ad hoc development, rapidly expanding populations, inadequate housing, lack of essential services, poor sanitation, disease and poor health services, public transport issues, air and water pollution, waste management, lack of social and cultural cohesion, lack of educational and employment opportunities, high crime rates, flooding and economic inequality.

Better answers were those that:

- Gave a clear (and accurate) definition of a megacity. Whilst not an explicit requirement according to the question, most took the initiative to provide a working definition.
- Clearly introduced their chosen megacity and explained why this city had grown over recent decades.
- Selected two specific challenges and discussed these in considerable detail. Some of the weaker responses were quite broad in describing challenges and did not provide any specific details relevant to their chosen megacity.
- Described specific management strategies already being implemented and suggested possible solutions based on the successful approaches to similar problems in similar cities. Weaker responses lacked specificity (e.g. 'more buses'); did not consider the limited available funding in developing countries when suggesting costly strategies implemented in more developed cities such as London and Tokyo; did not discuss current initiatives; and/or did not discuss initiatives that directly addressed the challenges selected.
- Clearly assessed the effectiveness of the selected strategies, both in the short and long term and provided supporting evidence of efficacy. Whilst referring to the Three Pillars of Sustainability can be an effective means of evaluating selected strategies, students should avoid narrowing their assessments to just one impact from each pillar. Better assessments carefully weighted the various costs and benefits of a strategy and used numerous pieces of supporting evidence to successfully argue why a strategy was effective or not. Providing a definition of the Three Pillars of Sustainability is also unnecessary.
- Used current, accurate and appropriately communicated data. Many students did not use data effectively, such as when describing pollution. Representations such as 'Mumbai has a pollution rate of 4.7' or 'Mexico City's pollution is measured at 168' are meaningless without context or units. When referring to 'current' scenarios, students should be encouraged to use data from within the last five to ten years (wherever possible).
- Used subject specific language and terminology and avoid terms such as 'mass amount' and 'extreme' especially when describing population growth, slums, urbanisation, urban sprawl or air pollution.
- Used their gained knowledge and understanding to address each aspect of the exam question. It was clear that a number of students attempted to rewrite a rehearsed essay, or at least tried to fashion it to suit the question.

Question 9

This question assessed criteria 3 and 6

20 students chose this question.

Most responses to this question demonstrated an understanding of their topic. Strong responses included a clear, logical, essay structure. It is important to use formal language in essay responses along with terminology specific to the geographical phenomena being discussed. Place names should be capitalised. Most of the stronger responses provided contextual information about Anthropogenic Climate Change (ACC) with the nature, rate, extent and causes of the land cover change explained in the introduction.

Almost half of the students chose 'Sea Level Rise' as their land cover topic with 'Coral Reef Loss' and 'Glaciers and Ice Sheet Retraction' and 'Desertification' discussed by the remainder who chose this question. Examples given for 'Sea Level Rise' included Kiribati, Maldives, Florida (U.S.A), Netherlands, and Bangladesh. The Coral Triangle and Great Barrier Reef were examples frequently used for 'Coral Reef Loss' responses. Nepal, The Himalayan region, Greenland, and Iceland were some of the examples used in 'Glaciers and Ice Sheet Retraction' responses. The students who chose 'Desertification' used regions within Africa and Australia as examples.

Responses to this question were required to explain how anthropogenic climate change (ACC) is having an impact on one form of land cover change (from the list provided) and to describe the important impacts of the process. Stronger students were able to discuss both social and environmental impacts. A description of two initiatives (management strategies) that address these effects, and an evaluation of their effectiveness was also required. Some students struggled to discuss two initiatives that have been put in place to mitigate the effect of (ACC) on the land cover change. Being able to assess the effectiveness of the initiative was also challenging for some students.

Some students chose to discuss management strategies at different scales including local scale responses such as use of sea walls in island communities impacted by sea level rise, and global scale responses to mitigate a range of impacts to different land cover types, such as the Paris Climate Agreement.

Weaker responses often mentioned generalised impacts to the land cover without linking these to the effects relating to specific examples or places.

Question 10

This question assessed criteria 3 and 6

16 students chose this question.

Half of the students chose deforestation the remainder chose mining, land and soil degradation and urban expansion to discuss as the human activity impacting on land cover change.

This question required students to use specific examples to discuss the negative environmental impacts of one form of land cover change due to human activity. Weaker responses used only one example. Stronger responses described the nature and extent of their chosen human induced land cover change and gave good examples of negative environmental impacts. The question also asked for a description of one existing program that is being used to reduce the negative environmental impacts, and to assess the effectiveness of that program. Stronger responses mentioned sustainability in their discussion.

Most students responded with well-structured essays and used terminology appropriate for their chosen topic. All students responded in essay form; however, some students did not start with an explanation of the land cover change they were addressing. It is recommended that students commence with a strong introduction of their chosen topic and finish with an equally strong conclusion which focuses on the future sustainability of their selected rehabilitation program.

Question 11

This question assessed criteria 3 and 6

9 students chose this question.

Some of the common topics included were coal, mineral ore and tobacco. Students were required to write using essay format the role that technological advances have played in changing the distribution and consumption of one particular commodity, good or service. Some examples that were provided include changes to the Internet and social media to enhance the product, others referred to improvements in transport including shipping and airline transport. Specific examples greatly assisted student responses.

An important part of this question was to provide some of the important implications for these changes on people and places and then to evaluate how effective this would be over time.

More care needed to be taken to ensure these were written in essay format. This includes a clear introduction, body paragraphs and a conclusion.

Question 12

This question assessed criterion 3 and 6

23 students chose this question.

The first part of the question required students to select one cultural element and describe its geographical spread and distribution. The most common elements selected were sport (most notably basketball), fashion labels, language, architecture, and religion. Overall, this part was done well. Most responses were able to identify where the particular element originated and how it has spread globally. The next part of this question required discussion on two factors that contributed to the pattern. The most common responses referred to improvements in technology, transport and global communication methods including social media. These were also generally well written.

Students were then required to use specific examples to explain some of the economic and social implications of the pattern and then assess their impact now and into the future. This part was

generally the weakest section of the essay. Some students did not address this section at all and many only addressed only social and not economic implications.

There was a tendency for some students to write a pre-prepared response which did not address the question. In some cases, students merely gave the history of the element, and their response was written like a history essay and not a geographical essay ignoring implications on society and the economy and contained limited detail on the processes of globalisation.

The question was required to be written in essay format. Some students had poor essay structure with no distinct paragraphs and limited or no use of geographical terminology. Well-written responses were articulate, cohesive, well-structured essays incorporating geographical terminology and specific geographical examples.