

2024 ASSESSMENT REPORT

GGY315120 GEOGRAPHY

General Comments

The 2024 Geography exam followed a similar line of questions as previous years. Strong candidates were able to show a thorough understanding of the course content and were able to prepare themselves well for the exam. Students should use past exam questions to assist their study preparation for the exam. However, they should refrain from writing pre-prepared responses as this was evident in many candidate responses meaning they were unable to adequately address components of exam questions.

- Candidates should ensure they follow the suggested time guidelines for each section to enable enough time to adequately respond to each section.
- Students are encouraged to avoid writing their responses in pencil as, in some cases, this made the exam difficult to read.
- Students should ensure they address the criteria assessed in each section.
- When referring to continents, countries and cities, capital letters must be used. This was a common mistake made throughout the paper.
- Many candidates also incorrectly identified continents as countries.
- While it is appropriate in some instances to shorten long country names like United States of America to USA or Democratic Republic of Congo to DRC, it is not appropriate to shorten country names to the first two letters of the country i.e. the shortening of Brazil to BR.

Section A

Question 1

This question assessed Criterion 4

It was recommended candidates spend 25 minutes on this question. Candidates were instructed to refer to the Information Sheet and the World Population Data Sheet (2023) when answering this question.

Part A

Candidates were asked to describe the pattern of Infant Mortality Rates as shown on the choropleth map depicting “*Infant Mortality Rates – 2021*”. In their answers, candidates were asked to refer to the level of economic development and human wellbeing in specific countries and regions.

Strong answers accurately noted and named the regions and countries of the world where infant mortality rates (IMRs) were high, moderate and low. These responses included supportive data from the map legend, as well as IMRs for specific regions and countries as seen in the 2023 World Population Data Sheet. In addition to accurately describing the pattern of IMRs, strong responses made a direct link between more developed countries having low IMRs and less developed

countries having high IMRs. Some candidates also identified any exceptions to this pattern and were rewarded for doing so.

Weaker responses failed to include relevant data and/or refer to specific regions and countries in their description of the pattern of life expectancy. Simply identifying a link between IMRs and economic development did not provide adequate evidence of reference to the stimulus. Many of the weaker responses also included an incorrect definition of IMRs or didn't note that the IMR in the stimulus was expressed as a percentage, while the IMR on the data sheet is expressed as a rate per 1000. This resulted in a number of responses incorrectly referring to IMR data. For example, many candidates expressed an IMR of 66/1000 on the data sheet, as 66% in their response.

Some candidates also used this question to discuss the Demographic Transition Model in relation to countries in Stage 3 being countries with high birth rates and declining death rates and countries in Stages 4 and 5 being countries with low birth rates and death rates. Many however, did not clearly link this population modelling theory to IMRs, instead only identifying that countries in Stage 3 have low levels of economic development, so must therefore have high IMRs.

Candidates should be reminded that the use of first-person narrative (e.g. 'I', 'me', 'my', 'we', 'us', 'our', etc.) should be avoided. Once again, capitalisation of proper nouns was an issue in many responses, particularly when referring to the continents of Africa, Asia and Europe. Many candidates also incorrectly identified continents such as South America, Africa and Europe as countries, and countries such as India as continents. Candidates should also be reminded that including the units for data is essential (e.g. \$US for GNI PPP/capita, years for LE, etc.) and that it is LDCs and MDCs not LDC's and MDC's.

Part B

In this question, candidates were required to identify one country with a high IMR and one country with a low IMR and include figures for both from the World Population Data Sheet (2023) in a well labelled table. In addition, for each selected country, candidates were required to select two other vital rates from the World Population Data Sheet (2023) and explain how they indicate the level of wellbeing and economic development for each country.

The more effective vital rates chosen included GNI PPP/capita, life expectancy, crude birth rate, total fertility rate, moderate/severe food insecurity and % urban. The strongest responses explained how and why their chosen vital rates provide an indication of economic development and wellbeing in a country. The level of explanation and justification for the chosen indicators was a key factor in delineating between strong and weak responses. Weaker responses often only identified a link between their selected indicators and development rather than explaining this link. Many also discussed death rates as an indicator of development. Students need to be very careful here, as death rates can be high in countries with high levels of economic development (due to population ageing) and can be high in countries with low levels of economic development (due to conflict, high rates of disease, etc.). Many students simply stated that high death rates are an indication of poor access to sanitation and healthcare, and this is certainly not the case for countries like Japan that has a death rate double that of Ethiopia. Many students also incorrectly claimed that IMRs are high in countries with high CBRs because the more babies being born, means more would die. It is critical that students understand that CBR, CDR and IMR are all rates per 1000, not a total number.

Question 2

This question assessed Criterion 6.

The responses to this question highlight a need for students to comprehensively prepare for this section, and to accurately read and answer all three sub-questions as part of the overall question. While some responses demonstrated a basic understanding, others lacked the depth and specificity expected from in-class learning.

This year, students were asked to suggest a possible solution that could be implemented to address a challenge experienced in rural or remote Australia. In the past, students have been asked to explain a solution already in place at a specific location. Students are advised to carefully read the question and tailor their prepared content in order to answer sufficiently. The strongest responses understood this and if they wrote about an already implemented solution from a specific location, they evaluated its possible application in other rural or remote areas in Australia. Similarly, if they suggested a possible solution or program that isn't already implemented in a rural or remote town, they assessed to what degree it could work in a specific rural or remote town.

Due to the relative similarity between questions year to year, students can expect to be sufficiently prepared for this. Students should focus on applying in-class knowledge to their responses rather than providing generic, superficial answers.

Stronger responses talked about specific places and specific initiatives/programs/named solutions, along with an assessment of their sustainable outcome over time.

Weaker responses made vague suggestions ranging from "increased government funding" or "the government should/could do more" without providing concrete solutions or considered sustainability or outcomes over time.

Section B

This section assessed Criteria 4 and 5.

Question 3

This question required candidates to explain the causes of anthropogenic climate change and discuss both the social and environmental consequences of this process. Candidates were required to refer to one MDC and one LDC in their response.

Stronger responses correctly used key concepts like enhanced greenhouse effect, carbon sinks, albedo effect and radiative forcing in their explanation of this process. These responses also made reference to the human activities causing this process and how they are leading to anthropogenic climate change. Weaker responses referred to the ozone layer, which is not associated with anthropogenic climate change.

Candidates are required to discuss TWO impacts of this process and how these impact people and environments. These should be impacts which have been studied in the course: rising sea levels leading to land cover loss, glacier and ice sheet retraction, cropland/pasture loss, coral reef loss/degradation and desertification. Stronger responses were able to accurately explain how anthropogenic climate change caused the impact and how this impacted land cover and people. Students referring to rising sea levels should ensure they refer to thermal expansion and not just

melting of land-based ice. These responses also need to discuss how the rise in sea level impacts the environment including loss of land, increased salination of soil and impacts on agricultural land. Candidates that discussed coral reef loss need to ensure this is in relation to anthropogenic climate change and not due to overfishing, increased tourism and pollution run off. Desertification needs to link with anthropogenic climate change and not overgrazing or deforestation. Appropriate causes of desertification include prolonged droughts as a result of extreme weather events caused by anthropogenic climate change.

Appropriate social impacts included decrease in tourism revenue, people needing to relocate as climate change refugees and impacts on employment and livelihoods. It is important that any social impacts are linked back to anthropogenic climate change as the cause of the social impact.

The most common MDCs referred to were Australia, New Zealand and USA. Common LDCs were Indonesia, Kiribati and Bangladesh. Frequently discussed impacts were rising sea levels, coral reef loss and desertification.

Question 4

This question required candidates to describe the nature and consequence (social and environmental) of one form of human action on land cover using a specific example from a country of choice.

The forms of human actions referred to should have been those covered throughout the course including deforestation, mining, urban expansion, land reclamation, the expansion and intensification of agriculture, rangeland modification, land and soil degradation, irrigation and land drainage.

The most common human actions discussed were deforestation, mining and urban expansion. Deforestation was written about more than any of the other topics and often referred to Brazil and Indonesia as two of the most popular countries of choice.

The focus of the response should be the direct human action leading to land cover change. Deforestation should be discussed in relation to how humans are physically removing trees and the purpose of this (nature of the action). Common examples included removal of forests in Indonesia for plantation of trees for palm oil. This was a better way to approach this question, rather than referring to the removal of trees due to bushfires, which is not a direct human action. Strong responses referred to the direct human action and how the land had changed over time.

Social impacts needed to refer to the consequence of the human action i.e. impact on indigenous groups, impact on tourism and the aesthetic value of a place. It is appropriate to discuss illness and disease that may be encountered as a result of the land cover change for example an increase in malaria due to an increase in mosquitoes. It is not within the scope of the question to comment on the social impacts in relation to the type of employment. For example, mining may lead to social isolation and disconnection from family, but this is not related to land cover change and should not be included in the response.

Section C

This section assesses Criteria 3 and 5.

Candidates were allocated 45 minutes to complete all questions in this section. It was recommended that candidates allocate 15 minutes per question. All questions in this section contribute equally to the ratings for each criterion. Weaker responses missed a question or spent longer on one or more questions.

Some responses were strong in identifying specific transport and technology advancements, world cities, and regions of economic power and cultural influence; however, for higher ratings for criterion 5, the geographical processes and phenomena needed to be explained in addition to their identification.

Examples should allow a candidate to highlight and explain the geographical processes they relate to. For higher ratings the examiner needs to see the understanding of the candidate from the discussion of the processes and phenomena through the examples.

Question 5

This question provided candidates with an opportunity to show an understanding of the processes of advances in technology/communication and transport and how they have influenced the process of globalisation.

Strong responses were able to provide a geographical definition of globalisation, rather than a simple economic definition and relate this definition to impacts on world trade, global financial markets, international corporate/retail branding and developments and changes in the media.

Weaker responses tended to provide lists of advancements in technology and/or transport with minimal discussion of their contribution to the process of globalisation.

A commonly cited example of advancements in transport included containerisation. Stronger responses using this example were able to explain how this standardisation of transport has enabled more rapid movement between transport types (road, rail, shipping) and how enhancements such as port facilities and cargo ships have facilitated the global flows of goods, including citing transport networks and hubs. Some strong responses also cited the role this technology has had enabling countries to outsource primary and secondary industries due to lower costs despite barriers of distance.

A commonly cited example of advancements in technology included the internet. Stronger responses were able to explain the role of fibre optic cable networks and recent developments in satellite technology to enable the increased accessibility of content and flow of ideas and information.

Some candidates were able to link their examples of advancements in technology and transport by discussing how they have been integrated to increase the process of globalisation, such as through e-commerce platforms that incorporate cheap offshore manufacturing, global online banking, rapid transport networks, and improvements in logistics technology that incorporate global positioning systems to connect MNC products to consumers.

It is important to note that the process of globalisation is uneven and to avoid generalised statements such as 'everyone has access to everything on the internet whenever they need it', as whilst nearly twice as many people have access to the internet than not, there are still billions of people without access. Some stronger responses identified the increasing connectivity of the global population to the internet and explained this aspect of the process of globalisation by highlighting that global transport and communication networks that enable increased global connectivity, can also create barriers to those outside of these networks.

Weaker responses tended to give a historical recount of past globalisation and changes in technology and transport without explaining how improved transport and enhanced/new technology have contributed to the process of globalisation.

Question 6

This question required candidates to refer to two world cities with a focus on how one is important for cultural change and how the other is important for economic change. Strong responses defined the term 'world city', with some referring to different measures or classifications such as Kearney's Global City Index or the Globalisation and World City's (GaWCs) classifications of cities. The most popular choices for World City examples in order, were New York City, London (both alpha ++ cities according to GaWC), Tokyo, Paris, Dubai and Singapore (all alpha + cities according to GaWC). Other cities chosen as examples included Seoul, Hong Kong, Brussels, Sydney, Shenzhen, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Buenos Aires, Berlin, Milan, New Delhi, Shanghai, Melbourne, Mumbai, Stockholm, Istanbul, Beijing, Lagos, Nairobi, Amsterdam and Dublin.

Most candidates were able to identify two world cities and identify how one is important for cultural change and the other important for economic change. Stronger responses were able to discuss the importance of their chosen cities as centres for innovation, as well as how they facilitate the transmission and integration of these ideas.

Weaker responses tended to list a range of cultural or economic sites or features of a city, without relating these to the role of the city in global economic or cultural change.

It is important to discuss the impact that the chosen city has as a centre for cultural and economic change, rather than to discuss the cultural or economic elements of a country that have been globalised. So rather than identifying a cultural food dish that has been globalised (as this is usually associated with the country of origin, not specifically a city), it would be best to discuss the role the chosen city has had in the diffusion of the cultural food dish.

Strong responses could name Multi-National Corporations (MNCs) or Trans National Corporations (TNCs) related to economy or culture and how these are interconnected and increase transnational diffusion and integration as a part of the globalisation process. Strong responses discussed global supply chains and the role of cities as hubs for facilitating economic and cultural flows of information and ideas and the infrastructure they have to enable these processes.

Strong responses discussed the ongoing increase in urbanisation globally and the role cities are having in economic and cultural flows as part of global transport and communication networks.

Question 7

This question was generally answered well by candidates.

The question required candidates to discuss trends/shifts in cultural influence and global economic power in specific regions and/or countries of the world that have occurred in the past decade. Some of the countries and regions most often discussed included China, India, the United States, and Europe. Other countries/regions discussed included the G7, E7, BRICS and G20 countries.

Some areas of focus for discussing recent shifts in economic power included changing population structures, interdependence of economies, differences in GDP growth rates between countries, global and regional military conflicts, regional and foreign investments, trade wars, increasing affluences, global pandemics and involvement in global economic institutions or groups.

When discussing cultural influence, many candidates were able to identify the processes of Americanisation, Europeanisation, and Westernisation as persisting cultural processes globally despite the growing influence of other regions as the world becomes more globalised.

Section D

This section assessed Criteria 3 and 6

Students had a choice of question in this section. The length of time allocated to this section was 45 minutes. They only needed to write on one of their depth studies completed through the year. This should have been written in essay format.

Question 8

This question was reasonably well answered, and it was clear that many candidates had allocated a generous amount of time to this question.

The first part of this question required students to choose a megacity in an LDC and explain why the city had grown. Many candidates were able to successfully choose a megacity in an LDC, the most common being Rio de Janeiro, Jakarta, Sao Paulo, Mumbai, Mexico City and Dhaka. Stronger responses were able to define a megacity and provide the population size of their chosen city, to demonstrate their understanding that it was indeed a megacity. The question required an explanation as to why it had grown and only few responses addressed this part of the question in detail. Those that did referred to rural-urban migration and were able to discuss push pull factors associated with this. It was clear that some had simply supplied a pre-prepared response which didn't adequately respond to the question.

The second part of the question involved describing two major challenges that had arisen due to the rapid growth of the city. Responses included pollution, traffic congestion, social inequality and poor housing developments. Stronger responses referred to how the growth of the city's population had led to these challenges and were able to discuss why it was a challenge for the megacity. In some cases, students had referred to a city as "sinking" but did not refer to how this related to the growth of the city's population.

Candidates needed to identify and evaluate strategies which addressed the challenges. Strong responses discussed solutions that were already in place in the city and were then able to evaluate how successful they had or hadn't been and the reasons for this. Others were able to

refer to solutions that were successful in other cities and suggest why or why not they would work in the megacity being discussed. Weaker responses gave very little detail on the strategy and failed to provide an evaluation on the likelihood of success.

Question 9

There was a relatively even spread of topics chosen by candidates for this question, with the most popular being 'Rising sea levels leading to land cover loss'.

Some candidates did not describe or identify the relevant geographical background to the issue of their chosen land cover change or cover its key components as required by criterion 6.

Weaker responses gave a rudimentary explanation of Anthropogenic Climate Change with explanations such as 'Anthropogenic Climate Change is caused by the burning of fossil fuels'. Further explanation of how these are related is essential to demonstrating understanding of the geographical processes and phenomena related to the land cover change. This was required by both the criteria and the question.

Some candidates incorrectly attributed Anthropogenic Climate Change solely to the Ozone layer. This demonstrates a fundamental misunderstanding of the process of Anthropogenic Climate Change. Some candidates also confused the albedo effect with the Enhanced Greenhouse Effect. Some candidates confused UV radiation with Infrared radiation.

The question required candidates to describe local and/or international initiatives that have been put in place to address the impacts of Anthropogenic Climate Change on their chosen land cover. Stronger responses identified their chosen initiatives as being either adaptation or mitigation initiatives and discussed the scale at which these initiatives would have an impact.

Question 10

This question was only answered by a limited number of candidates. Responses needed to refer to the negative environmental impacts of one form of human impact of land cover change. It was then essential that an existing program and evaluation of the program were discussed. Deforestation was the most common impact discussed. It is important that candidates address all parts of the question to ensure they meet the requirements of criterion 6. In some cases, the evaluation of the program was poorly addressed.

Question 11

Only a limited number of candidates answered this question. Candidates were required to give specific examples of how the distribution of production and consumption of one commodity, good or service had changed. They were then required to evaluate the social, economic and geopolitical implications of these changes. Candidates need to ensure that all elements of the question are addressed.

Stronger responses showed a great level of detail as to how the commodity, good or service had changed over time and its likely pattern for the future. Reference to specific countries and regions was essential and greatly enhanced these responses. Weaker responses provide limited detail and did not show an in-depth level of the topic they had studied. There were also some responses that weren't in essay format, which affected criterion 3.

Question 12

Overall, the standard of the essays for this question was satisfactory with some candidates preparing very well for this topic. Conventional essay format and structure was consistent in many 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. Candidates should be reminded that the use of headings and bullet points are not appropriate in this format.

A large variety of cultural elements were chosen to explain the process of globalisation and discuss the spread and adaption of this element. Fast fashion, architectural styles, religions and political ideals were among the most popular cultural elements discussed. Candidates should be encouraged to discuss one specific cultural element (e.g. Roman architecture), rather than a whole topic (e.g. architecture).

The first part of the question asked candidates to describe the geographical spread and distribution of one cultural element from the list provided and explain how advances in communication and transport have influenced this pattern. While a handful of candidates carefully described this pattern, many candidates chose to ignore this part of the question entirely. Stronger responses clearly described where their chosen cultural element originated, where and when it initially spread and its current distribution. These responses also explained, using specific examples, how particular developments in communication and transport contributed to the spread of this element.

While a definition of globalisation was not required, those that were able to adequately define the process of globalisation were rewarded. It was clear from the essays, that many students misunderstood the concept of globalisation, either incorrectly defining it or misunderstanding how transport and communication developments have contributed to it.

The second part of the question asked candidates to evaluate some of the economic, social, or geopolitical implications of this pattern now and into the future. Stronger responses were able to give specific examples of countries/locations where their chosen cultural element had been implemented and linked these to specific economic, social or geopolitical implications of this element being introduced/adapted.