



General Certificate of Education

Geography 6036

Specification B

GGB6 The Practical Paper

Report on the Examination

2007 examination - January series

Further copies of this Report are available to download from the AQA Website: www.aqa.org.uk

Copyright © 2007 AQA and its licensors. All rights reserved.

COPYRIGHT

AQA retains the copyright on all its publications. However, registered centres for AQA are permitted to copy material from this booklet for their own internal use, with the following important exception: AQA cannot give permission to centres to photocopy any material that is acknowledged to a third party even for internal use within the centre.

Set and published by the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance.

General

This is the third time that this revised style of paper had been set and most candidates appeared to manage it well. However, two general points seemed to emerge from this year's paper.

Firstly, as the paper is testing a broader range of skills than was the case in the past there is less likelihood of some centres striking lucky in that the paper concentrates on one technique that they have done really well whilst other centres strike unlucky for the opposite reason. This has probably produced a fairer examination but it might also have reduced the mark range – particularly at the bottom – as there are fewer examples of totally blank answers or sections of answers.

Secondly, and of more concern, is the poor preparation for the fieldwork based question evidence amongst a minority of candidates. It still appears that some centres, despite repeated advice in these examiner's reports, are not encouraging their students to prepare a piece of fieldwork that matches the needs of the type of question they will be asked. Candidates for the paper should be prepared to answer questions on some permutation from the following steps in carrying out a field investigation:

- setting general aims
- narrowing these aims down to focus on a hypothesis or research question
- considering ways of selecting information in a fair, unbiased way
- collecting data that is as reliable as it can be
- presenting that data in a way that makes it suitable for analysis
- analysing the data
- drawing conclusions from the data
- summarising what has been learnt about the topic or environment – making reference to a specific place at a specific time, not just repeating what was learnt in class or by studying a textbook.

Many centres have developed field studies that are very well suited to this style of question. Some others do fieldwork exercises which are obviously very interesting and from which their students probably learn good geography but which, sadly, are not well suited to them scoring good marks on the fieldwork section of GGB6.

Question 1

Part (a) was well done with most candidates scoring two or three marks.

The common mistakes were:

- a lack of differentiation between aims and the hypothesis. The aims should be general and the hypothesis should focus on one particular part of the aims
- stating a hypothesis in a way that is so vague that it is not actually testable
- stating a null hypothesis without an alternative hypothesis.

As a rule of thumb, examiners are told that the hypothesis should make reference to two variables that might be linked. There should be some reference to the direction of variation in each case. For instance, 'The speed of flow increases downstream' is valid whilst 'The speed of flow changes downstream' is not.

Thankfully in part (b) it seemed that fewer candidates than normal wrote about 'collection' or 'presentation' in this exam session although some candidates of all abilities still made that cardinal error.

By far the most common technique chosen was Spearman. Most people who chose to write about this reached the top of Level 1 or Level 2. To reach Level 2 they needed to explain how they got to their coefficient of correlation and then to say what it meant. Either they could refer to it being positive or negative, strong or weak or significant at a particular level of confidence. If all three aspects of the correlation were discussed sensibly, the answer could gain full marks.

Similarly explaining how to use a scatter graph was acceptable but the answer only reached Level 2 when the graph was interpreted to show a trend or relationship. When the best-fit line was explained clearly and the importance of identifying residuals was also discussed then the answer moved towards the top of the Level.

Part (c) of this question differentiated very well, producing a full range of marks.

At the risk of stating the obvious, it is worth reiterating the characteristics of the best answers. These:

- summarised the data collected – not repeating it all but making precise reference to some of the key points
- referred to the conclusions that could be drawn with regard to their original hypothesis—making special reference to the results of their technique described in (b). In particular, these answers made reference to the strength and reliability of their conclusions.
- discussed ways in which their results matched what they expected and, as importantly, did not match what was expected.
- made reference to particular places and particular interesting observations.

Poor answers from obviously able candidates most often lost marks because they read like textbook extracts without any evidence that the candidate had thought about or gone beyond what could have been learnt in class.

Question 2

In part (a)(i), candidates were expected to ensure that their class boundaries covered all the possible values, with no gaps and no overlap. At the same time, they were meant to lead on to the production of a useful map.

1 mark was awarded if there was no overlap and no gaps. So 0 – 10, 10.1 – 20 etc. would have gained this mark whereas 0 – 10, 10 – 20 etc. would have had overlaps and 0-10, 11 – 20 etc. would have had gaps.

A further mark was awarded if sizes of the four different groups were not extremely unbalanced. For instance, 0-20 as a group would actually have included 13 of the 16 wards and would have produced a very unbalanced map. Equally, choosing group sizes based on multiples of 15 produced a map with no values in the category of 30.1 to 45.

The best answers to this question ranked the 16 wards and chose group boundaries that put four wards into each category. This then led on to a map that showed a clear geographical pattern – the main aim of the exercise!

In part (ii) the marks were awarded as follows:

- 1 mark for transferring the class boundaries to the key [candidates were not penalised again if they had lost a mark for a slip in (i)]
- 1 mark for choosing a shading scheme that showed increased intensity for the wards with a greater density of employees
- 1 mark for adding a title to the map or to the key which stated what units were used on the map
- 2 marks for correctly shading the wards (lose 1 marks if one ward was wrong and 2 marks if 2 or more wards were wrong)
- 1 mark for shading consistently on the map and on the key

Most candidates scored at least 3 marks, even for some very scruffy and rough maps. Quite a number of candidates scored maximum marks, with the best producing beautiful pieces of work.

The most common loss of a mark was failure to state what units were being used. The second most common mistake was a lack of consistency, particularly on the key where it was a common mistake to show some kinds of line or dot shading far more densely than they appeared on the map itself.

Most candidates were able to calculate the radius of the pie chart in part (a)(iii) and to draw it successfully. Correct calculation should have produced a radius of 13.12 mm. Any radius between 12 and 14 was allowed. 3 marks were given for the correct construction of the circle.

If the size was wrong 1 or 2 marks were awarded for correct stages in the working, if rough working was shown.

3 marks were then available for dividing the pie correctly.

2 marks were for getting the angle correct.

The third was for putting the two sectors in the correct places (with the male sector starting at '12 o'clock' and working round to approximately '25 to the hour') and then shading them both according to the key.

It is good to report that 6 marks was probably the modal mark for the question. A minority drew the circle to the wrong size but then gained three marks for the division.

Almost all candidates had access to compasses and a protractor. A small number made brave, but foolish efforts to draw the diagram freehand. It must be stressed that this is a practical exam and candidates must be prepared to use the correct instruments. The examiners did consider putting a reminder on the front cover of the paper, but decided that this might well have given too big a clue as to the content of the question.

In part (a)(iv), the mark scheme stated that 2 marks were available for 'basic' comments such as 'the number of males working at the site has fallen' or 'the number of females has increased but only by 3'. To get beyond this, candidates needed to manipulate the figures to show clear understanding of changing proportions, or to make relevant comments that put these changes in the context of the local and national changes in employment.

Comments in this latter category needed to go beyond the level of 'women are not content to stay at home anymore' or 'manufacturing has been mechanised'. The better candidates made reference to the change in function from manufacturing to distribution and link these changes clearly to the changes in the size and composition of the workforce.

Part (b) produced the poorest response on the paper. It was quite a departure compared with previous papers and many candidates had clearly not studied this topic in depth. Moreover, the question came at the end of a complex paper and so it seemed that many candidates, even some of the best ones, did not have time to think carefully or to plan their answers. Instead, they rushed into their answers and produced rather muddled attempts to both sections.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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