

UNIVERSITY OF MALTA

**SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE
SEC**

**GEOGRAPHY
MAY 2014**

EXAMINERS' REPORT

**MATRICULATION AND SECONDARY EDUCATION
CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS BOARD**

SEC Geography
May 2014 Session
Examiners' Report

Part 1: Statistical Information

Table 1 shows the distribution of grades for the May 2014 session of the examination.

GRADE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	U	ABS	TOTAL
PAPER A	27	35	49	46	19	-	-	16	5	197
PAPER B	-	-	-	17	20	9	7	21	12	86
TOTAL	27	35	49	63	39	9	7	37	17	283
% OF TOTAL	9.5	12.4	17.3	22.3	13.8	3.2	2.5	13.1	6.0	100

Part 2: Comments regarding candidate's performance**2.1 COURSEWORK:**

Each candidate had to prepare two fieldwork reports.

During the moderation exercise, 188 projects in 18 secondary schools were moderated.

General comments

- Commendable qualities
- Choice of topic reflected the suggestions in the syllabus with investigations in physical geography in one project and the in human geography
- Report was of the length suggested
- Illustrated with graphs and tables
- Evidence of engagement in the field supported by secondary sources
- Captioning of photographs done properly
- Data collection was referred properly in the text
- Conclusion reflected the work performed.

Points where the reports could be improved

1. Maps appended to reports need explanation as to their purpose
2. Projects should not be made to look like a collection of photographs normally found in an album
3. Illustrations to be well annotated
4. Conclusion should reflect the results of the fields study
5. Students are to be reminded that TWO separate field reports are to be presented.

2.2 PAPER I (A) and (B)

Although this paper is common to all candidates who applied for Paper A and for Paper B, responses by the former scored higher marks.

All questions were compulsory

Q.1 Re: Map reading (Survey Map extract Gozo) (16 marks)

Answers reflected the degree of preparation in the reading and interpretation of topographic maps. Most IA candidates obtained a score within the 10 to 14 range, whilst IB candidates scored 5 to 10 with a few exceptions who were awarded marks that tallied with those of paper IA. The primary difference was in answering part (d) where candidates had to write one paragraph giving three reasons why farmhouse rentals in Gozo is a successful touristic investment by combining the topographic information on the appended map and their knowledge on short-stay touristic ventures. Answers to the other questions that required a degree of compass orientation knowledge numerical estimates of lengths and areas and grid references were fine overall.

Q. 2 Re: Locations on an outline map of the World (16 marks)

Answers to this question marked out the candidates' levels of location knowledge and preparation for the exam itself. With the locations expected to be asked clearly specified in the syllabus it is clear that most candidates did not give enough time to prepare this part of the syllabus. It was only the candidates who obtained overall high marks in the full paper who provided the correct answers. The average mark was lower than that of the first question with the paper B candidates rarely scoring up to 10 marks.

Q. 3 Re: Features of erosion in the countryside (6 marks)

Answers to this question were overall correct with all candidates providing good reasons for the causes of soil erosion and its control by human intervention.

Q. 4 Re: Features in a glaciated environment (7 marks)

Candidates responding this question reflected their degree of broad preparation or otherwise: paper IA candidates responding much better than those of paper IB. The parts that confused IB candidates were in identifying an erratic and the formation of a drumlin. This was a clear example that this part of the syllabus was not given due attention to the relevant details.

Q. 5 Re: Impact of farming on the rainforest (5 marks)

Answers to the Amazon rainforest questions were tackled correctly with candidates providing good insights into its deforestation for farming practices as well as the main characteristics of type of farming of their choice. Paper A candidates scored 4-5 and Paper B candidates 2-4. A small number provided very weak answers.

Q. 6 Re: The distinction between intensive and extensive farming (6 marks)

Most of the candidates attempting either paper ticked the appropriate boxes as answers to this question on types of farming. A number of candidates however inverted the answer to the first two parts of the question.

Q. 7 Re: The importance of national parks and tourism (6 marks)

This question consisted of two parts. The first dealt with natural parks to which most of the candidates opting for Paper A answered correctly with a number of the other candidates failing to provide a good reason for the third feature. As for the second part, dealing with tourism in Malta, most of the reasons given were correct.

Q. 8 Re: The location of footloose industries in southern England (6 marks)

Fairly good and complete answers were given by Paper A candidates in defining footloose industry and in giving two examples. A number of Paper B candidates found difficulty in expressing the meaning of the term and in explaining part (iii) in section (b) when linking university research with footloose industries.

Q. 9 Re: Contrasts of population pyramids of rural and urban India (6 marks)

Most of the parts in this question were answered correctly with a good understanding of the population pyramids presented and interpreting well the push and pull factors involved in migration of populations from rural village to city.

Q. 10 Re: The main causes of global warming (6 marks)

Practically all candidates answered part (a) well with minor difficulties encountered in part (b). It is clear that the causes of global warming were understood, and well-written reasons were provided.

2.3 PAPER 2A

Paper 2A office Numbers 1-197

Paper 2A was composed of 2 sections. The candidates had to answer two questions from each section. Section A was composed of Questions 1 to 4 and Section B was composed of Questions 5 to 8. Each question had a total of 25 marks. Out of the 197 candidates, twelve (12) candidates were absent. Consequently, 185 candidates sat for the exam.

Section A

Q. 1: Re: Structure of the Earth

A diagram of the structure of the Earth was provided and candidates were asked to describe the core layers. The second part of the question required an explanation the processes operating in the mantle layer and the resultant effects on the crust layer.

Question 1 was answered by 67 per cent of the candidates (127 candidates). The average mark was 17 out of 25.

In answering part (a), candidates were mostly correct on the generic descriptive terms. This question could have been better answered with more detail on differences in internal temperatures and material properties. With regards to part (b), the answers were not always exhaustive, although most candidates demonstrated some knowledge about the processes related to convection currents. Question 1c, was answered well by most candidates.

Q. 2: Re: Erosion and landforms in the upper river course

The question was composed of part (a) which required explanation on vertical erosion in the upper river course and a description of three upper course landforms and related formation of landforms.

Question 2 was answered by 35 per cent of the candidates (74 candidates). The average mark was 13 out of 25.

In most of the answers to Question 2a, candidates failed to understand that the question was related to the upper course river process of vertical erosion and outlined the different types of erosion present in a river (ex. corrosion, corrosion, hydraulic action etc). Question 2b was better delivered with most answers related to the landforms formed in the upper river system, mainly, waterfalls, V-shaped valleys plunge pools, interlocking spurs, rapids. A few candidates went out of point in explaining ox-bow lakes and meanders, which are middle-course river landforms.

Q. 3: Re: Coastal erosion and deposition

This question was in 2 parts. In part (a) the candidates were to describe four main types of coastal erosion processes that operate on the coastal zone. In part (b), the candidates were to discuss measures to control coastal erosion.

Question 3 was answered by 70 per cent of the candidates (129 candidates). The average mark was 15 out of 25.

Overall, the candidates knew the keywords pertaining to the four main erosion processes. However, there were instances where the explanation of the terms was scant or confusing. When answering part (b), most candidates answered with more relevance, expounding on either hard and soft-engineering techniques and even added diagrams to assist in the explanation.

Q. 4: Re: Atmospheric depressions over the Mediterranean region

The question was divided in two parts. Part (a) referred specifically to the difference between warm and cold front formation over the Mediterranean region. Part (b) required a sketch and an explanation of why atmospheric depressions in the Mediterranean form mostly in winter.

Question 4 was answered by 23 per cent of the candidates (42 candidates). The average mark was 10 out of 25. This question was the one with least responses and the answers, that were attempted, were overall of poor quality.

When answering part (a), candidates offered confusing answers related to the formation of cold fronts and occluded front. The typical weather characteristics typical on each front were at times confusing and incorrect. When drawing sketches in part (b), these left much to be desired. Descriptions of atmospheric depressions over the Mediterranean were at times poor, too generic and irrelevant.

Section B

Q. 5: Re: Urbanisation in Less Economically Developed Countries

This question was divided in two parts. Part (a) required a definition of 'urbanisation' and a list two causes of urbanisation in LEDCs. Part (b) required a discussion of one problem generated by rapid urbanisation and a list of one government scheme to alleviate such a problem in Brazil.

Question 5 was answered by 66 per cent of the candidates (122 candidates). The average mark was 16 out of 25.

The first part of the question was appropriately addressed by most candidates; albeit there were a few candidates who provided quite a weak or incorrect definition of urbanisation, confusing it with the term 'population'. Considering this is a Paper A question, more correct and exhaustive answers were expected. Most candidates however listed correctly the causes of urbanisation in LEDCs. In part (b), although many candidates correctly identified the issue of 'self-help schemes', the level of detail in explaining such scheme varied considerably from very good and lengthy answers to very weak and brief responses.

Q. 6: Re: M4 Corridor in London

It was composed of two parts. Part (a) asked for a definition of the term 'high tech industries' and to provide two examples; part (b) required the candidates to study the diagram of the M4 corridor near London UK and list five factors that affect the development of high tech industries in London.

Question 6 was answered by 33 per cent of the candidates (61 candidates). The average mark was 17 out of 25.

When answering part (a) most of the candidates were able to come up with appropriate definitions of high tech industries and related examples. It seems that in part (b), most candidates were able to list between three to four factors with detail and relevance whilst a fifth factor was, in many cases, discussed shortly or poorly. Few candidates were able to link the example of the diagram in their discussion and mostly relied on generic memory work.

Q. 7: Re: Artificial fertilisers

This question had three parts. Part (a) asked for negative effects of the use of artificial fertilisers on the environment; part (b) required a discussion of the advantages provided by hedgerows (or rubble walls). On the other hand, part (c) asked about two farming practices which may produce better agricultural products.

Question 7 was answered by 76 per cent of the candidates (140 candidates). The average mark was 16 out of 25. This question was by far the most popular of all the questions in this paper, registering the highest percentage in terms of responses.

Question (a) was answered appropriately by most candidates; likewise was question (b), demonstrating that the candidates have a good grasp of knowledge related to positive and negative techniques exercised in agriculture. On the other hand, quite a few candidates lost marks in naming types of farming such as 'intensive farming' or 'arable farming' as examples of farming practices which produce better agricultural products. This question did not necessarily imply mentioning a type of farming ex. organic farming, greenhouse farming, and market gardening but could also include activities such as crop rotation or strip farming.

Q. 8: Re: HDI indicators

This question was divided into three parts. Part (a) required list of three main indicators used by the United Nations to establish HDI for different nations. Part (b) asked about what governments can do to improve their quality of life whilst part (c) required the candidates to list two reasons that may bring differences in the HDI within the same country.

Question 8 was answered by 24 per cent of the candidates (44 candidates). The average mark was 13 out of 25.

Most candidates answered part (a) well; however, the answers for part (b) were largely unsatisfactory. Most answers were erroneously oriented towards issues related to birth control, clean ups, urbanisation control and very few correctly addressed the answer in relation to aid. Part (c) was on the whole well answered, but since it carried only 4 marks, it did little to compensate for the amount of marks lost in part (b) which carried 15 marks.

2.4 PAPER 2 B

Candidates had to choose four questions, two from each section. Each question carried 25 marks.

Paper 2B office Numbers 5001 - 5086

Section A

Q.1 Re: Worldwide earthquakes and rate of fatalities

54 candidates out of 86 opted for this question. The average score was 13 marks

(a) The great majority were able to name the regions with the highest death toll but few knew what to describe as requested.

(b) Many candidates mentioned correctly why some developing regions have a higher death toll by an earthquake but the points were very limited with many mentioning that the Governments of such countries have a poor economy and therefore no funds for prevention and then for emergency measures.

(c) The candidates had to explain measures taken, before and after, to reduce the death toll. Some candidates, here, were repeating some points already mentioned for section (b). Some others mentioned bizarre ideas how to protect oneself during the moment of an earthquake; there were also cases where only some emergency measures were mentioned and ignored completely the necessary prevention plans to be made in case of a future earthquake.

Q.2 Re: The characteristics of a drainage basin

54 candidates attempted this question. The average score was 10 marks.

Many labelled the sections correctly but others saw a tree in the sketch; some others thought that water flow went from point C (the mouth) to point A (the source).

Consequently, many candidates who were incorrect in part (a), were also so in this part, where they had to describe the features mentioned.

In this part, the candidates needed to explain two man-made activities that could alter the river flow.

Few mentioned the building of dams, embankments, river deviations; some others thought of acts of vandalism with rubbish thrown into the river blocking the flow; a small number correctly mentioned deforestation, which in the long run can cause catastrophic floods and sudden alterations in the river flow.

Q. 3 Re: Coastal landforms caused by deposition.

Only 8 candidates chose this question. The average score was 9 marks.

Many of these drew a sketch denoting erosional landforms with caves, arches and stacks; hence, no marks could be assigned for these cases.

In this part, the candidates had to mention some sustainable human activities to be practised on these coastal depositional features: the responses were varied but mostly referring to controlled tourism and bird watching.

Q. 4 Re: Anticyclones over the Mediterranean region

16 candidates out of possible 86 opted for this question. The average score was 11 marks.

(a) Some thought that anticyclones meant the arrival of storms (depressions) which is not the case. Then, those who, for this case, correctly mentioned good weather, did not give a very much wider overview but simply referred to high temperatures (sunny, hot).

(b) In this part, the candidates had to explain some effects of anticyclones over the Mediterranean in summer. Many repeated the same points as in (a).

The object of this part was to receive responses on the effects on fauna and flora, human activities and water supply. However, most candidates did not see this meaning in this part of the question and saw it as a repetition of part (a).

(c) In this part, the candidates had to comment about the effects of having a permanent high pressure over the Mediterranean region. Here, some candidates brought up correct points, which could in part be utilised for the previous sections. The candidates understood that this condition would have extreme weather consequences, as in a hot desert, with catastrophic effects on nature and human life in general in this region.

Section B

Q. 5 Re: Shantytowns

30 candidates chose this question with the average score being 13 marks.

(a) Most candidates could define the term and provided correct examples. However, many responses were very terse and given in an English rather difficult to decipher.

(b) Most candidates were able to provide correct reasons why shantytowns develop in LEDCs but few technical terms are ever utilised as rural development, push and pull factors, core and periphery. Candidates provide relatively good points related to the technical terms without ever mentioning them.

(c) Finally, the candidates needed to suggest a measure to alleviate the problems of shantytowns. In this case, many candidates mentioned provision of adequate housing and employment; some mentioned education, medical facilities or proper infrastructure as electricity, water supply and a sewage system.

Q. 6 Re: The four industrial sectors of an economy

48 candidates attempted this question with an average score of 13 marks.

(a) Most candidates defined the four sectors correctly.

(b) In this part, the candidates needed to explain why many countries moved from the primary and secondary industrial sectors and boosted the tertiary. Few candidates answered correctly but there were a small number of good references to the toil entailed to work in the primary and secondary sectors and the better working conditions and salaries in the tertiary.

(c) Finally, the candidates had to describe an emerging sector in the tertiary. Some incorrectly did not refer to emerging sectors but to improvements in the services sector. However, some got it right by referring to the leisure industry, the communication sector, educational programmes and others.

Q. 7 Re: The draining of wetlands

Only 13 candidates opted for this question with an average score of 7 marks.

Most of these candidates failed to answer correctly and actually did know the meaning of the phrase. Few candidates managed to get some marks by providing some points about the making the land dry.

Consequently, most candidates failed to mention advantages from draining wetlands. Some references to the creation of new land were correct.

In this part, these candidates needed to discuss the negative impacts on the elimination of wetlands. No candidates referred to wetlands as nature reserves, which need protection for the sake of the scenery, the flora and the fauna living in this ecosystem.

Q. 8 Re: The contrasts in development between countries and regions

42 candidates out of a possible 86 opted for this question. The average score was 12 marks.

(a) Candidates needed to give reasons why certain regions are less-developed than the rest of the country. Many candidates misread the question and just mentioned reasons for under-development of a region or a country. There few, however, who correctly referred to regional disadvantages such as remoteness, lack of communications and harsher climate.

(b) As regards problems related to less-developed regions, most of the candidates provided correct responses, though many times in the form very terse answers, hardly legible.

(c) Regarding the support, which can be given to such regions or countries, most of the candidates provided correct points by referring to need of hospitals, schools, roads and social housing. The answers provided, however, are very often in the form of very confused phrases, which hint the answers rather than giving straightforward correct responses.

**Chairperson,
Examiners' Panel
2014**