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Examiners' Report January 2010

GCSE Geography 6GE03

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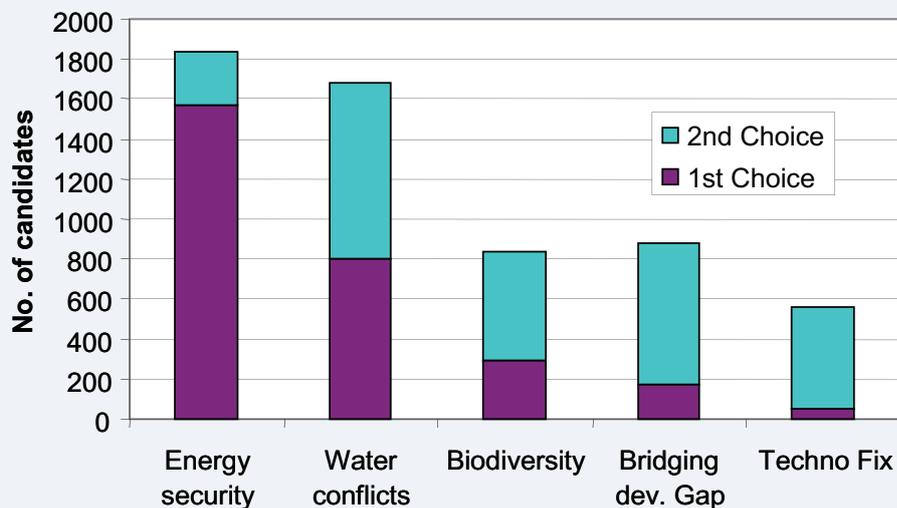
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Geography 3 (6GE03) Contested Planet General Comments

January 2010 was the first examination for Unit 3, Contested Planet. Around 3000 candidates sat the exam. All questions in Section A attracted some candidates although Energy security and water conflicts were the most popular choices (see Figure 1). About half of all candidates chose Energy security as the first Section A question they attempted. Biodiversity under Threat, Bridging the Development Gap and The Technological Fix were more popular as second choice questions than a candidate's first choice.

Figure 1: Question popularity

Unit 3, Section A question popularity



A number of candidates wrote both of their Section A responses in the space provided for their first choice. Centres are reminded of the need for candidates to use the separate spaces provided for Section A choice one and two.

Section B of the examination was based on pre-release resources, taking the topic of Superpower Geographies as the basis for the resources booklet. The resources focussed on the Small Gulf States. Centres are reminded that the Contested Planet topic for future examination series is essentially chosen at random. There will not be a predictable 'rotation' of topic. In general there was ample evidence that candidates and their teachers had used the resources in class to gain a greater understanding of them and that some candidates had engaged in additional research.

General comments Section A

Most candidates seemed to organise their time effectively and provided full answers to both Section A questions, plus Section B. As with any examination, candidates do need to manage their time to ensure they leave enough to complete all questions in Section B. Suggested timings are:

Figure 2: Unit 3 time management

Section A 50 marks		Section B 40 marks
1st Question 'a' = 15 mins.	2nd Question 'a' = 15 mins.	About 20 mins on a 12 mark sub-question; 25 mins on a 15 mark question.
'b' = 25 mins.	'b' = 25 mins.	
40 mins.	40 mins.	70 mins.

A number of points relate to the 10 mark data stimulus questions in Section A:

- Some candidates spent significant time planning their response to the 10 mark data stimulus Section A questions. Whilst planning is wise, too much time can be spent planning. The 15 mark sub-questions in Section A may benefit from planning.
- Some candidates provided introductions and conclusions to the Section A 10 mark data stimulus questions. Often these introductions wasted time of generalised context. Time that could have been spent focussing on the question.
- In the published mark schemes 'structure' refers to the logical organisation of candidates work. In general introductions are not needed, especially to the 10 mark sub-questions. The 15 mark 'b' questions often benefit from a summative statement that provides an overview assessment or evaluation. This might take the form of a 5-6 line summary that returns, directly, to the question. Longer conclusions often simply repeat information already presented.
- A number of candidates chose to ignore, or only make very scant reference to, the data stimulus Figures provided for Section A. Figures should be used by candidates to provide structure and breadth to their explanations. Information of the Figures can be thought of as a 'springboard'. Ideally candidates explain what is before them and add in their own ideas and examples to further develop their explanations.
- Candidates need to make full use of data stimulus material. Some candidates only referred to one area of Figure 1 (e.g. the Arctic) or one water situation on Figure 2 (e.g. economic water scarcity).
- Some candidates seem to have chosen some questions based on what they considered a relatively easy part 'a', only to come unstuck on the (higher tariff) part 'b'. Candidates are strongly advised to consider both parts of Section A questions before they start their response.

In all questions it is very important that candidates focus on command words and key words. In terms of command words, the range that will be encountered is relatively small:

- All Section A 'a' parts used the command word **explain**
- Section A 'b' parts used either **evaluate** or **assess**
- Section B used either **explain** or **evaluate**

These words have very specific meanings and in general the top Level of the mark scheme cannot be accessed unless these words are addressed. There is very little credit (i.e. only Level 1) for candidates who **describe**.

Across the paper there are a number of key words which are important. These words are often missed. They can be very commonly used words, but candidates often struggle with their meaning in the context of a Geography question. A useful exercise would be to go through the January 2010 paper and check candidates' understanding of the key words shown below:

Physical / human	Condition	Global	Economic
Costs / benefits	Actions	Players	Social
Environmental	Factors	Consequences	Political

There are other common key words such as 'impacts' (which can be positive or negative) which often cause problems and lead to unbalanced responses.

1A) AS the global demand for energy increases the demand ~~is~~ for oil increases as well. This leads use to extracting oil for ~~diff~~ many different locations and different ways around the world. many of these new locations are environmentally sensitive areas where the oil exploration is technically difficult which leads to both economic and environmental costs.



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Examiner Comments

This candidate has provided an introduction to their answer to Question 1a. Their introduction really re-states the question but does not begin to answer it.



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Examiner Tip

In Section A, for the 10 mark data stimulus question, do not waste time writing the question out or providing introductions. Try to get straight into your answer and give yourself more time on the longer 15 mark questions.

The 15 mark 'b' questions give candidates an opportunity to develop their own ideas and use examples and case studies. Candidates need to take care to:

- Address any key words such as 'global' in Question 4b and 'large scale' in Question 2b. Failure to take note of these key words often leads to incorrect case study and example choice.
- Provide a range of examples ie two or more. Some responses to Question 2b focussed on only one example (eg the Three Gorges Dam).
- An alternative approach is for candidates to present 4 or 5 examples / case studies in descriptive fashion. Fewer case studies, applied to the question and command word (see below), would yield a higher mark.
- Recognise that questions are likely to use command words such as assess, evaluate or discuss. These command words require candidates to present both sides of an argument or debate and use evidence to move towards a judgement. Balance is important.

On a positive note there was ample evidence of candidates trying very hard to assess and evaluate where appropriate. This was seen in the form of summative statements weighing up the costs and benefits of case studies as well as summary overviews returning to the original question. Consequently many candidates achieved Level 3 or Level 4 marks in the 12-15 range.

Comments on individual questions

Question 1 Energy Security

In part 'a' it was important that candidates provided a balance of economic and environmental costs, as well as using a range of locations (A-I) from Figure 1. Very narrow responses, for instance on the environmental consequences of oil drilling in the Arctic, tended to score poorly. There was no expectation that all locations in Figure 1 would be referred to. Reference to 3 or 4 was sufficient. Better candidates recognised the value of referring to some technically challenging locations and some environmentally sensitive ones. Some candidates drifted into peak oil and recent oil price history. Often this more general information was less than effective. Overall, the environmental consequences tended to be stronger than the economic. Some candidates had excellent knowledge of the impact of tar sand exploitation in Canada and its economics. The best candidates often used economic and environmental costs as themes to structure their answer, rather than listing costs for each of the 9 locations on Figure 1. In general, there was some good understanding of the environmental and economic consequences of fossil fuel exploitation especially in the USA, Canada and the wider Arctic.

The ~~economic~~ ^{environmental} costs of such a scheme would also be very high. Fresh water use is four times higher than a conventional barrel of oil. With the global ~~issue~~ issue of rising demand for water and increasing water security, it is unclear how environmentally sustainable this oil supply is. Likewise this type of mining emits 3 to 5 times more CO₂ into the atmosphere per barrel of oil. This in addition enhances the greenhouse effect greatly and adds to global warming. The delicate landscape and national parks are completely destroyed and turned into barren "moonscape". This in addition the chance of forest fires and landslides in the surrounding areas at the surface on top is increased. Finally this project will create a huge amount of toxic waste ~~that~~ ~~from~~ ~~the~~ waste from the mining procedure. This will ~~have~~ harm the already affected ecology and food webs.



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Examiner Comments

This candidate provides some good environmental detail on one location shown in Figure 1 as part of a response that achieved Level 3. The response is factually sound and uses good terminology to demonstrate the environmental costs of mining tar sands.



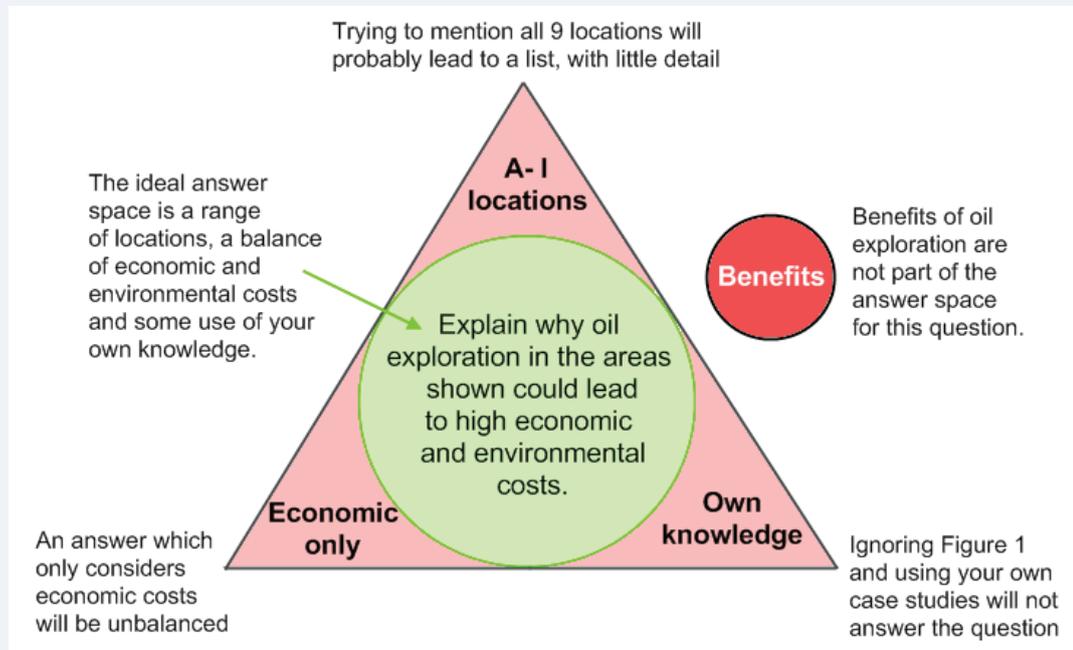
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Examiner Tip

Try to use good geographical terminology. It impresses the examiner and shows that you are being precise and accurate.

Candidates might like to consider Figure 3 as a way of visualising the ideal answer space response to this question. The further candidates drift towards the points of the triangle, the less successful their answer will be. Leaving the answer space triangle completely (eg the benefits of oil exploration, or social costs) will produce an irrelevant response. will be. Leaving the answer space triangle completely (eg the benefits of oil exploration, or social costs) will produce an irrelevant response.

Figure 3: Visualising the answer space for Question 1a:



Part 'b' required candidates to assess the relative importance of global players in terms of energy supply. The question command should have led candidates towards a statement of which players they believe are the most important to energy supply. This requires more than a descriptive statement of the role of different players. In many cases candidates did discuss a range of players and move towards a judgement of their importance, which was pleasing to see. The players most commonly discussed were OPEC, Russia (often related to the role of Gazprom) and the supermajor oil TNCs such as Shell and Exxon. Some of the Gulf States appeared and stronger candidates were prepared to discuss the role of consumers and individual governments such as the UK and France.

Often discussion of the latter focussed on government's role in planning energy policy in order to reduce dependency and create a more sustainable energy mix. In general, knowledge and understanding of individual players was sound. Better candidates tended to move away from a narrow focus on oil and considered wider energy supply. For instance, some considered the future importance of current leaders in renewable energy eg France and nuclear power.

In relative importance, OPEC OPEC is the most important player because collectively it supplies the majority of importers with the the majority of the supply. The least important is are the TNC'S as their range of intlerance is limited except with some state owned companies like Gazprom.

**ResultsPlus****Examiner Comments**

This is a candidate's summary at the end of their answer to Q1b. Notice how it returns to the question and uses the phrase 'relative importance' from the question. It provides a clear statement on the importance of OPEC and TNCs.

**ResultsPlus****Examiner Tip**

While conclusion are not needed in the 10 mark data stimulus 'a' parts, they are useful in the 15 mark 'b' parts because the questions call for you to make a judgement i.e. assess or evaluate.

Question 2 Water Conflicts

Part 'a' required candidates to explain a map of water scarcity and stress. As is always the case with a world map, insecure knowledge of place can be a barrier to success. Many candidates referred to areas of high physical water scarcity as being 'around the equator in places with very little rainfall' or similar incorrect statements. For Level 3 of the mark scheme it was important that candidates referred to the variations shown on Figure 2 ie areas with little scarcity, future scarcity, physical and economic scarcity. Equally a balance of human and physical factors was important. Clearly a candidate narrowly focussed on physical geography explanations for one part of the map is unlikely to score highly.

Some candidates chose to move into case study mode and focussed on one location such as California. This tended to produce narrow responses not focussed on the variations shown. In general the majority of candidates could identify some physical factors (climate, rainfall) and better candidates referred to geology and climate change (linked to areas of future scarcity). Economic scarcity was generally understood well and there were pleasing links to the idea of finance limiting access to water technology and water supply – even in areas with an abundance of water. Overuse by humans and the reasons behind it, such as industry and modern farming were often referred to in depth and pollution of water supplies was a common theme. Relatively few candidates sought to explain the reasons why some areas have no water stress or scarcity.

Areas on the map which have no water scarcity are places with cheaper, abundant supplies of water. This usually occurs in MEDCs or areas with snowy mountains, aquifers or groundwater supplies. Even though farming uses 69% of water use, industry 21% and domestic 10% of global water use, if a country can afford water it is easily accessible. For example China produces 70% of its food from agriculture, but due to good water supplies and an increasing economy, the south do not suffer at all. Poverty + water poverty go hand in hand. Future water scarcity could result in either an increased cost in water, or a lessening water supply to due water conflicts, geopolitics or overabstraction.

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Examiner Comments

This candidate gained maximum marks for Q2a. Part of the reason for this was the reference to areas of no water scarcity, and future water scarcity on Figure 2. There was also some good use of examples such as China and reference to water poverty.

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Examiner Tip

When faced with a world map as a Figure, try to make sure you refer to several areas and all key categories. Focussing on one or two parts of a world map will produce a narrow and unbalanced response.

Part 'b' required candidates to focus on the contribution large scale water management schemes might make to water security. The key here was the focus on water security. Many candidates chose, correctly, schemes such as China's Three Gorges Dam and the wider south-north water transfer project. Many evaluated the numerous costs and benefits of these schemes from a social, economic and environmental perspective. Far fewer candidates focussed effectively on the contribution these projects made to water security. Many did argue that such schemes would create water winners and losers and these tended to be more successful answers. Small scale schemes/ bottom up schemes could be considered, but only alongside large scale schemes. Some responses focused entirely on bottom-up, NGO led water security schemes and these responses often failed to meet the demands of the mark scheme.

There were many responses which used the Aral Sea as a case study or example. These were often descriptive and poorly related to the question of water security. To be successfully used, candidates needed to argue that the original Soviet diversion of the Amu Darya and Syr Darya rivers increased water supply to previously arid areas and farmers. The saline Aral Sea has of course shrunk dramatically, affecting fishing, ecosystems and navigation – but the sea was never used as a significant fresh water supply. Even if restoration of the sea were successful, it would still require desalinisation to be used as a freshwater supply.

Another large scale water project is taking water from one place to another, water transfer schemes. The Colorado drains 8% of America and the basin covers an area 1.1 times the size of France. Many countries want access to it. California has always had water shortages because it has a large agricultural economy, huge population and an arid climate. California takes water from the Colorado in the Alamo Canal, the All American Canal and Moves it around the country in the State Water Project. Taking all of this water has allowed California to grow without water shortages. However in 2007 there was a review that stated California had until 2016 to reduce the amount it takes from the Colorado by 20%. This is because it was taking so much other states and Mexico were going short.



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Examiner Comments

This candidate, who gained L4 for Q2b, writes in an evaluative style. They present the key facts about water projects in the USA and then relate this to increased water security in California and lower water security in other states and Mexico.



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Examiner Tip

In Q2b it was important to evaluate the role of large water management schemes in water security, not a more general evaluation of all of the schemes environmental, social and economic costs and benefits.

Question 3 Biodiversity under Threat

In part 'a' candidates were expected to discuss the three categories shown on Figure 3 and thus use the rows and columns to provide structure to their response. Some candidates reduced this to more generalised threats to ecosystems/biodiversity. Candidates do need to have some grasp of the difference between goods and services, ie goods being physical resources taken from ecosystems and services being processes that help maintain the wider environment and hence human wellbeing. Better answers managed to maintain a focus on ecosystems with reference to Figure 3. However, some responses lost this thread and failed to explain the role of ecosystems in flood protection, maintaining air quality and fresh water supply. In general most candidates could provide adequate reasons for very degraded and degraded goods but very much less secure when attempting to explain improved goods such as crops and aquaculture and degraded services. The language of Figure 3 is from the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment which candidates do need to be familiar with.

3a. Ecosystem goods, such as wild fisheries and wild foods have become very degraded through over-harvesting of the fish and food leading to a much smaller supply, pollution and disruption of the habitats of the fish and the wild foods ecosystems have also caused ~~supply~~ the supply to decrease. Oil tankers spillages are likely to kill many fish and deforestation and agriculture has meant wild foods have little area to grow on. Deforestation has also caused a huge decrease in the number of trees and therefore the wood fuel supply. Fresh water has been polluted by


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Examiner Comments

This candidate avoided writing a long introduction to Q3a and got straight into the reasons why some ecosystem goods are very degraded. The answer has a high density of reasons and avoids waffle. It formed part of a Level 3 response.

Question 3b proved challenging to some candidates. The focus of the question on 'global actions' was picked up by some but not by all. At the top end there were some excellent evaluations of global actions, strategies and policies such as:

- CITES
- The IUCN Red List
- The United Nations Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries (UN-REDD Programme) / sustainable forestry
- Debt for nature swaps
- Biosphere reserves

It was possible to use local examples to exemplify global actions. For instance a discussion of the UNESCO biosphere reserve model could have been linked to a more localised example and whether this had worked. More often than not the global context was ignored and candidates described the actions of the Great Barrier Reef MPA, Korup National Park or SMMA. In many cases there was a mix of global and local actions and these types of responses did score relatively well. There is a place for local case studies such as Campfire, but candidates do need to work to apply these to the question set rather than be determined to use them come what may. It is a characteristic of A2 that application of case studies to specific questions is very important for the candidate who wants to achieve a high grade.

b) There are many global actions designed to protect biodiversity. One example of this is CITES. This ~~is~~ was put in place to control and abolish the trade of endangered and exotic animals. It has done much to stop it and protect these animals, however the black market is still a hotspot for this. Another global organisation is Ramsar, which strives to protect and restore wetland areas. An example of a place where this has been successful is the Great Fen, where small areas of wetland were connected, now many species live in the diverse ecosystem.

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Examiner Comments

In this L4 response to Q3b the candidate introduces CITES and comments on the fact that black market undermines its success. They then make reference to Ramsar sites and use a local example. Many candidates failed to do this and only referred to the local examples and not the global context.

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Examiner Tip

Geography is fundamentally about scale and you should expect examination questions to use scale words such as global, local and regional. Make sure you spot these and answer at the appropriate scale.

Question 4 Bridging the Development Gap

Although not a particularly popular choice, question 4 was relatively accessible. 4a was often answered well. Candidates were aware of a range of difficulties relating to the measurement of development. Many referred to Figure 4 in some detail and discussed the meaning of the 4 development indicators in the context of the countries shown. Often other examples, such as the Gender Development Index were brought into the discussion and there was meaningful discussion of the meaning of 'development'. This was often related to models such as Rostow or ideas of dependency – which demonstrated candidates had a good understanding that development could be seen as mostly economic, or a much wider process. The concept of sustainable development was used in a similar way. Candidates did need to take care not to ignore Figure 4 and move to quickly into a much broader discussion. Weaker candidates often described the differences shown in Figure 4 rather than focussing on the question of difficulties. Many good responses were seen which related to the technical difficulties of getting accurate, comparable data on which to base judgements about development levels.

4b was often completed in a very competent way. Development, and lack of it, is a subject many students and their teachers are clearly passionate about. It was extremely pleasing to see a wide range of secure, real world knowledge relating to the role of global organisations in narrowing the development gap. Many candidates were evaluative as they were prepared to see that TNCs or the WTO might have a role in narrowing the gap, or widening it. This ability of a candidate to see both sides of an argument is a characteristic of a high grade response to Section A 'b' answers. The role of the WB and IMF was often included and there was good knowledge and understanding of Saps and HIPC which often took the view that these actions had mixed results. The role of NGOs such as Oxfam was often highlighted. Many of the best answers often included a summative paragraph – really a brief conclusion – that returned to the question and perhaps stated that global organisations had a mixed track record and that local actions were important too. This is very good practice and is to be encouraged. Five or six lines providing an overview that addresses the command word assess/ evaluate can be the difference between a Level 3 and Level 4 response. A minority of candidates did address a different question i.e. the role of top down versus bottom up approaches to development.

The World Trade Organisation encourages ~~the~~ free trade. However, it depends on a country. It may ^{is} be beneficial for some countries such as ~~F~~ China (its GDP has doubled every eight years during the last four decades) and Botswana (its GDP per capita has increased from \$800 to \$16,500 since the 1940s). However, it may not work for everyone. For example, some countries such as Cameroon should probably protect their farming industry rather than trade at the world market, ~~at a low price~~ buying cheap imports from foreign TNCs and thus losing jobs in the domestic industry. So the role of the WTO is very controversial.



This is part of a L4 response to Q4b. The candidate used a range of organisations including the G8, EU, IMF and WTO. This section on the WTO clearly outlines the benefits of free trade, but recognised that it may not help all countries. Therefore the candidate is able to see that some organisations might help narrow the gap for some,

Question 5 The Technological Fix?

Q5 was perhaps the most polarised in Section A. It seems to have been chosen by either the desperate or determined to impress. Figure 5 tended to be relied upon more than the Figures for other questions. This was not necessarily a bad thing. Many candidates had the idea of a mental grid in their minds, which if followed would ensure the question was answered thoroughly:

Using information in Figure 5, and your own knowledge, explain how farming technologies might have different consequences for human and ecosystem wellbeing.

Using information in Figure 5, and your own knowledge, explain how farming technologies might have different consequences for human and ecosystem wellbeing.			
	Ecosystem wellbeing	Human wellbeing	Own knowledge
Organic	+ / -	+ / -	Green Revolution or further details for one of the 3 farming types from Figure 5.
GM	+ / -	+ / -	
Hydroponic	+ / -	+ / -	

Clearly there was no need to cover all the positive and negative consequences for ecosystem and human wellbeing for each type of farming, but there was a need to have some balance. Some candidates virtually ignored the resource and moved very quickly into their own knowledge or the Green Revolution or one very narrow aspect of GM. Better candidates used at least 2 of the farm technologies from Figure 5 and made reference to some of their own ideas. In some cases knowledge of GM farming was uncertain and there were many unsupported statements about the nature of different types of farming and its supposed impacts.

In question 5b most candidates chose to focus on global warming. There was some relatively good understanding of geoengineering technological fixes and often these were evaluated, ie the supposed benefits were set against high costs and possible negative environmental consequences. A very wide range of other technologies could have been used although in many cases candidates moved into descriptive lists of technologies that might reduce carbon emissions and did not evaluate the contribution these might make ie how realistic they were in terms of cost, action and wider impacts. Land degradation was seen less often and was regularly skimmed over with no mention of any detailed strategies that might reduce it. Overall, reference to a huge range of technologies was seen but this was often not applied to the question.

Another technology that China is investing in to reduce land degradation is the Green Wall. This will be a 450,000 km long forest belt, taking 72 years to grow and costing \$8 billion but it will stop the spread of the Gobi Desert. If it's successful it will save an annual loss of \$50 billion due to soil erosion, crop damage and sand storms.



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Examiner Comments

This candidate made direct reference to technological fixes to overcome the issue of land degradation, which was unusual. Most candidates focussed on global warming. Reference to a range of technologies was required to get into the level 3 and level 4 bands of the mark scheme. This candidate also discussed renewable energy technology and geoengineering. They also recognised that some technologies are unfinished and still in development.

Question 6 The Small Gulf States

General comments Section B

There was some, limited, evidence of candidates rushing to finish question 6c. In general candidates provided three full answers to Q6a-c. As Section B is based on pre-release materials Centres need to consider how best to prepare candidates prior to the examination. Some suggestions would be:

- Helping candidates understand the geographical context of the area/region. The place in which the Issues Analysis is set may be unfamiliar to candidates. Teachers can help contextualise it. Many candidates would benefit from some atlas work and broad physical and human geography background before considering the pre-release resources in detail.
- Looking for synoptic links. Using spider diagrams and mind maps to link the pre-release resources to other topics in Unit 3 and Unit 1.
- Comparing the pre-release places to other places (parallel examples) to look for similarities and differences.
- Considering key terminology (often emboldened in the resources) and ensuring a very good understanding of this.
- Helping students engage in effective, selective, wider research.

In terms of the January 2010 resources candidates had generally developed a sound understanding of the resources. Areas of weakness tended to focus on geopolitical understanding, eg suggestions that some of the Small Gulf States were already superpowers, the imminence of a 'fight-back' (military or otherwise) by the USA or the role of Russia and China in the region.

In their responses candidates do need to make reference to the resources (by Figure number, or by quoting data). This includes the 'views', which tended to be under utilised.

In terms of 'unlocking' access to Level 4 (or the top of Level 3) in the mark scheme, candidates should consider the extent to which they are:

- Using the resources with accuracy
- Using the full range of resources, including the 'views' and websites (synoptic).
- Providing some (brief) additional material from research (synoptic)
- Presenting a balanced view
- Linking to other areas of geography, especially Units 1 and 3 (synoptic) and using parallel examples (synoptic).
- Linking to global themes (climate change, the development gap, ecosystem condition, resource depletion, sustainability agenda) and the Unit 3 synoptic themes (players, actions, futures) – all of which would demonstrate synopticity.

Some candidates used the first page of the Section B answer space to produce a brief plan for questions 6a-6c. Candidates perhaps spent 5 minutes on this plan. This is good practice. There was evidence that this planning focussed candidates on the specific key and command words in Question 6. As Section B is based on pre-release materials there is always the danger that candidates answer questions they believe they have 'spotted' prior to the exam, rather than those actually on the examination paper. A brief plan may help avoid this.

Superpower Geographies.

- 6 (a) Explain the factors that have led to rapid economic growth in the small Gulf States. (12)
- (b) Evaluate the possible environmental consequences of continued rapid urban and economic development in the small Gulf States. (14)
- (c) Explain how the growing economic power of the small Gulf States could lead to social and political tension within the region and beyond. (14)



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Examiner Comments

Notice how this candidate has underlined the command words in the questions, and circled the key words. This is a good way to focus your mind on the tasks you have been set. The candidate might have circled 'social' and 'political' separately, and they could have included 'within the region and beyond' in 6c.



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Examiner Tip

Before you tackle Section B, you might want to do a brief plan. Highlight key words and command words in the questions and then do a brief list of bullets or a very quick spider diagram. This helps you focus on the question and what needs to be included to produce a balanced response. An example of a plan from a L4 Section B is shown below:

PLAN (14)

3) Economic growth — SWF, FDI — supports — Country dependency
 — oil + gas — control of prices
 — Free trade zones
 — INCs — education

Consequences = impacts

urban	Good	Bad	economic	Good	Bad
b)	education health	over pop. ✓ living sand artificial land ✓ desertification + increase ✓ energy supply increase ✓ more breeding pollution	SWF FDI Free trade INC	conservation	unsustainable retreat poor wages INC pollution airports ✓

c) social + political tension

social — religion — ideology
 — culture
 — migration — bad
 — women!

political — geopolitics
 — westernisation
 — military dependence
 — oil + gas prices

Question 6a:

This question was generally done well by candidates. The key was to identify a range of factors that have contributed to the rapid growth of the Gulf States. Some candidates chose to focus mainly on oil and gas wealth i.e. a narrow response lacking range, but the majority were able to identify 4 or 5 factors. Most candidates used the resources effectively and mentioned oil and gas, sovereign wealth funds, the increasing role of the region as a global hub, transport and increased trade (e.g. FDI by TNCs). Factors such as the role of migrant cheap labour were seen less often. A number of candidates were very descriptive whereas some explanation of how a factor has contributed to growth was needed. Perhaps the most obvious area of synopticity was to link the Gulf States to wider globalisation. Some candidates used China's recent economic history as an example of this. Some reference to the resources was needed and candidates need to state where their evidence comes from or quote it directly.

It was pleasing to note that candidates resisted the temptation to diverge into gloom and doom scenarios based on the global recession. While contemporary knowledge is needed to answer Section B, teachers and candidates need to be aware that sometimes global events can overtake the best prepared pre-release materials. Candidates need to focus on the resources they are provided with and in the vast majority of case this happened.

At home they have made themselves attractive to investors and tourists. They have expanded the airports massively. The New Al Maktoum International airport will have 6 runways and a 20 million passenger capacity. Etihad Airways fleet is expanding by over 85%. Dubai also has the world's 2nd ~~to~~ largest man made port; Jebel Ali. Massive construction projects such as the Burj Dubai and the 7 star Burj-al-Arab Hotel as well as the Palm and world islands have made them a tourist hotspot.

The Gulf states have also opened up FTZs, free trade zones, such as Dubai Internet and Media cities and Dubai Knowledge Village. This has attracted major TNCs such as Microsoft, IBM and CNN. The states have also enjoyed world wide status thanks to things like the Bahrain F1 Grand Prix.

The Gulf states huge cash reserves have allowed for massive investment, which has led to increased FDI. In the UAE net flows of FDI went from 0.3 in 96-99 average to 6.1 in 2007. A rise ~~ere~~ of over 20 times. This has all led to rapid economic growth in all sectors, not just oil and gas.

Question 6b

This question was the least anticipated of the set of three. Candidates had to think for themselves and this is of course inevitable at A2. Most candidates were able to identify a range of possible environmental consequences relating to rising ecological footprints, water insecurity and loss of coastal habitats. Responses were often descriptive and just outlined a number of problems rather than attempting to evaluate these, ie state which were the most serious threat, or the most pressing threat. Other issues worthy or note are:

- A tendency towards generalised language eg 'pollution' or 'damage to habitats'
- A lack of focus on rapid urban and economic expansion – many answers failed to mention either and instead wrote in a generalised way
- Not stating the environmental consequences of assumed future water scarcity
- A lack of focus on the future ie if economic growth continues at similar rates what would the consequences be
- Some unsupported 'slum' style answers which equated urban conditions in the Gulf to places such as Dharavi in Mumbai.

Better responses recognised that there are some efforts in the Gulf that are focussed on more sustainable modes of economic growth and live eg Masdar City. There was also pleasing evidence that some candidates had engaged in their own research along this theme. There are a lot of resources available on the impacts of the various artificial islands in the Gulf but many candidates simply referred to 'ecosystem damage' as a consequence of their construction rather than being more specific about biodiversity loss and types of ecology.

b) Rapid urban and economical development has had major environmental costs associated. The main one being the degradation of coastal areas due to the rapid development of the land to produce Palm Islands and The World. Fisheries have declined and pollution is a major problem, as well as the destruction and disturbance of offshore habitats. However, the Dubai is trying to resolve these issues to make the development more sustainable by introducing the 'Blue Communities Initiative' which increases the awareness of the issue, increase habitats and reintroduce animals back into the area,



ResultsPlus

Examiner Comments

This candidate produced a Level 4 response to Q6b. Their answer is evaluative as it states 'the main' environmental problem and gives some details on environmental degradation. The answer is also synoptic as the candidate has included the 'Blue Communities Initiative' from their own research.



ResultsPlus

Examiner Tip

Make sure you use the websites provided in the Resources Booklet to engage in your own research prior to the examination. You can use other websites, newspaper articles, books, magazine and DVDs. In the exam, look for places to insert key pieces of extra information.

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Question 6c:

There was some evidence that 6c was rushed by a minority of candidates. Most managed to complete a full answer. Overall candidates seemed stronger on the political than the social tensions, perhaps surprisingly. The issue that affected a number of candidates was wholly focussing on political tensions at the expense of social ones. A very unbalanced response which was guilty of this was capped at a maximum of 8 marks.

Candidates do need to take care when focussing on political issues that they maintain a balanced view; some candidates were guilty of 'soap-box' Geography although these were in a minority. There was also some unrealistic political geography along the lines of 'the USA will become so jealous of Dubai's new superpower status that it will invade' – an unlikely future scenario on a number of levels. Conversely, some candidates demonstrated they had mastery of some interesting synoptic ideas and used China's recent economic expansion in Africa as a parallel to the Gulf's economic and political dependency on oil and gas exports and the investment of TNCs from the west.

Q6c also required some discussion of social tensions – for instance migrant labour, income inequality, culture clashes between immigrants and local people, gender disparity and religious differences. These issues were dealt with well by some centres who had clearly discussed these issues. Other responses were less sensitive to the cultural and social difficulties of the Gulf States.

Though the Gulf States are taking steps towards modernisation from the influencing superpowers, the strong cultural, religion and political instability makes it a very volatile region both nationally and globally and whilst it is politically unstable, the concerns over inconsistent fuel supplies are worrying the rest of the world. Economically the rapid growth of its economy has led to it also having influence over the prices of fuel. This is a main reason as to why superpowers such as America want to keep political ties with the region.

**ResultsPlus**

Examiner Comments

This candidate provides a good summary of some of the political tensions within the Gulf, and makes links to Superpower Geographies. It avoids drifting into highly dubious statements about war and conflict and explains why the USA remains heavily involved in this region of tensions.

Statistics**Overall Subject Grade Boundaries**

Grade	A	B	C	D	E
Overall subject grade boundaries	66	59	52	46	40
Uniform Mark	96	84	72	60	48

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