



**Coimisiún na Scrúduithe Stáit
State Examinations Commission**

JUNIOR CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION 2007

GEOGRAPHY

ORDINARY LEVEL CHIEF EXAMINER'S REPORT

HIGHER LEVEL CHIEF EXAMINER'S REPORT

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1. General Introduction

At Junior Certificate level, Geography is assessed by means of a single, written final examination of two hours duration, and with a total weighting of 150 marks.

The paper is divided into two sections, as follows:

- (i) Section 1, in a separate, returnable folder, contains 20 short, objective questions, with an internal choice in 3 at Higher Level and in 4 at Ordinary Level.
This section has a total allocation of 60 marks.
- (ii) Section 2 contains five structured questions, of which the candidate is required to attempt 3. This section has a total allocation of 90 marks.

This report should be read in conjunction with the examination papers and the marking schemes for 2007. These are all available for downloading from the website of the State Examinations Commission at www.examinations.ie.

2. Ordinary Level

2.1 Introduction

The paper is divided into two sections, as follows:

Section 1, in a separate, returnable folder, contains 20 short, objective questions, with an internal choice in 4.

This section has a total allocation of 60 marks.

Section 2 contains five structured questions, of which the candidate is required to attempt 3. This section has a total allocation of 90 marks.

2.2 Performance of Candidates

A total of 12087 candidates sat the examination at Ordinary Level in 2007.

The final results were as follows:

Year	Total	A	B	C	A+B+C	D	E	F	NG	EFNG
2004	12487	7.8	31.6	34.2	73.6	20.0	5.0	1.3	0.1	6.4
2005	12817	8.8	40.4	33.7	82.8	13.6	3.2	0.4	0.0	3.5
2006	12178	6.0	31.9	34.3	72.2	20.9	5.1	1.8	0.0	6.9
2007	12087	8.3	39.4	33.1	80.8	15.5	2.8	0.8	0.1	3.7

Table I: Grade outcomes Junior Certificate Geography (Ordinary Level) 2004-2007. (Grade Figures are percentages)

The results were very satisfactory and were generally in line with the outcomes in previous years.

2.3 Analysis of Candidate Performance

2.3.1 Section 1 – Short Questions

Overall, many candidates found these questions challenging and few achieved full marks in this section. Examiners noted a number of common errors. These included the following:

- Question 6: Few identified lines of latitude
- Question 8A: Few identified the atmospheric pressure at A
- Question 8B: Few identified symbol for warm front
- Question 10B: Few defined population density
- Question 11: Few identified hot desert climate regions
- Question 13: Few correct answers here
- Question 15: Few identified ‘salmon’ as a renewable resource.

2.3.2 Section 2 – Structured Questions

Question 1

This was the least popular and lowest-scoring question in this section.

A. This was generally well-answered, although many failed to correctly name three rocks.

B. This was poorly-answered, with few candidates achieving even half-marks. Waterfall and oxbow lake were the most commonly identified landforms, although few correctly named two. Diagrams were frequently of poor quality and it appeared that many candidates at this level have a poor understanding of this part of the syllabus.

C. Answers here were frequently weak also.

Question 2

This question was generally well-answered.

A. Most showed a good knowledge of soil-types in Ireland.

B. Part (i) was well-answered by most candidates who attempted it. Answers in part (ii), however, were generally weak.

C. Answering here was generally very satisfactory, with most achieving at least half-marks. However, naming of processes proved most difficult for many candidates.

Question 3

A. Examiners reported positively on the generally high quality of sketch-maps, with most candidates achieving full marks.

B. This was generally well-answered and most candidates achieved at least 7 marks.

C. Most candidates answered part (i) correctly. In part (ii), Education and Transport were the most common factors mentioned. Locations were frequently inaccurate in part (iii), and a number of candidates displayed poor knowledge of the correct referencing system for oblique aerials.

Question 4

A. Sketch-maps were generally of good quality and the average mark achieved was high.

B. Most candidates were able to suggest reasons for the development of Drogheda. It is of concern, however, that very few candidates were able to correctly measure the required distance in part (ii). This is a core geographical skill.

C. Few candidates developed two points here, as required. In many instances, simple statements only were given, with little if any development.

Question 5

A. Answering here was generally very satisfactory, with most achieving full marks in part (i). In part (ii), however, points were seldom sufficiently developed.

B. Only a small minority attempted this option and answers were generally weak. A computer factory was the most often named in part (i). Knowledge of processes was commonly weak in part (ii). Knowledge of industrial estates proved poor in part (iii).

C. Answers about aid were frequently general in nature and lacked sufficient detail.

D. This option was generally very well-answered. The calculation required in part (ii) however, caused problems for many candidates.

2.4 Conclusions

- The 2007 paper was seen as ranging appropriately widely across the syllabus in terms of both knowledge and skills
- Visual stimuli were reported in the main as being appropriate to the candidates
- The opportunity to draw sketch-maps – based on the Ordnance Survey extract and/or the Aerial Photograph – is reported to benefit the majority of candidates
- The additional element of choice in Question 5 – Geographical Mix – benefits all candidates
- The inability of the majority of candidates to correctly calculate the road distance in Question 4B(ii) is of concern
- Failure to develop simple points of argument is the single greatest cause of loss of marks in the examination.

2.5 Recommendations to Teachers and Students

- Students should familiarise themselves with the layout and rubrics of the paper
- They should read each question carefully and ensure that they are responding precisely to what is asked of them
- It should be noted that sketch-maps should be drawn with a frame and, where appropriate, a key/legend, as marks are earned for these
- Candidates should be encouraged to develop points of argument beyond mere simple statements, where required
- Examples should be given, where appropriate.

3. Higher Level

3.1 Introduction

The paper is divided into two sections, as follows:

Section 1, in a separate, returnable folder, contains 20 short, objective questions, with an internal choice in 3.

This section has a total allocation of 60 marks.

Section 2 contains five structured questions, of which the candidate is required to attempt 3. This section has a total allocation of 90 marks.

3.2 Performance of Candidates

A total of 39897 candidates sat the examination at this level in 2007. The final results were as follows:

Year	Total	A	B	C	A+B+C	D	E	F	NG	EFNG
2004	38550	8.6	35.3	36.2	80.1	17.5	2.2	0.2	0.0	2.4
2005	38290	11.7	35.3	33.1	80.0	16.8	3.0	0.2	0.0	3.2
2006	39932	9.6	32.2	33.9	75.8	20.5	3.4	0.3	0.0	3.7
2007	39897	8.9	27.7	30.7	67.3	25.7	6.2	0.7	0.1	7.0

Table II: Grade outcomes - Junior Certificate Geography (Higher Level) 2004-2007. (Grade figures are given as percentages)

The A+B+C rate, at 67.3%, was lower than in 2006 (75.8%). The E+F+NG rate of 7.0% in 2007 was higher than 2006 (3.7%).

Examiners noted that candidates with the required knowledge and grasp of geographical skills tended to achieve high marks, but the geographical skills of a number of candidates were less developed. A significant minority also have difficulties with basic skills in map-reading, e.g. grid-references.

Examiners expressed the view that some candidates who sat the Higher Level paper would have been more suited to the demands of the Ordinary Level paper.

3.3 Analysis of Candidate Performance

3.3.1 Section 1 - Short Questions

The average mark achieved for this section of the examination in 2007 was 45 out of the 60 available.

Examiners noted that common candidate errors included the following:

- Question 2: ‘stalactites’ and ‘stalagmites’ were frequently confused
- Question 4A: many candidates showed a poor understanding of global wind systems
- Question 9(i): “southern hemisphere” was frequently incorrectly given as the answer
- Question 15: most candidates lacked knowledge of bog terminology
- Question 20: many candidates showed poor skills with grid references.

3.3.2 Section 2 – Structured Questions

Question 1

A. Answers were frequently weak here. Many candidates gave a description of the water cycle only, or referred to point X, but not Y. Many did not mention relief rainfall.

B. The Central Valley of California was the most frequently named irrigation scheme. In general, advantages were well described, but little development of disadvantage was offered.

C. Answers here often focused on drought as a factor in the daily lives of people themselves, rather than on the development of a country, as required.

Question 2

A. Generally, answering was very good, and candidates demonstrated a very sound understanding of river erosion. Many, however, failed to develop the processes of landform formation. In addition, a number of candidates erroneously wrote about coastal landforms.

B. Similar comments were made by examiners to those for part A above.

C. Answers regarding the human uses of rivers were generally excellent. In part (ii) however, answers were often shallow, with insufficient reference to substantial aspects of river pollution.

Question 3

A. Many answers to part (i) were over-generalized and there was much discussion of CFCs and their impact on the Ozone Layer. Answering in part (ii) however was generally very satisfactory, with candidates demonstrating a good understanding of global warming.

B. Much of the answering here lacked sufficient detail. Many candidates concentrated on merely describing birth-rate and death-rate differences, instead of answering the question asked.

C. 'Brown earths' and 'podzols' were the most common Irish soil-types mentioned. Answers were generally good, although many referred to differences of location rather than of the soils themselves, as required.

D. Many candidates showed a poor level of knowledge of either fold mountains or plate tectonics.

Question 4

A. This question was rarely well-answered. Many candidates did not make use of the diagrams and showed poor knowledge of historical change in the iron and steel industry.

B. Many candidates had difficulty explaining the term 'urban renewal' and failed to name an Irish urban area.

C. The concept of change over time caused problems for many here. A good knowledge of Navan as an exemplar was shown, but there was little evidence of local case studies.

Question 5

A. Most answers contained the information required, but the skills of sketch-map drawing were often weak.

B. A common weakness in answers to this part was reference to tourist attractions which were outside the area of the map specified in the question. Many candidates showed poor ability to use grid references in locating features.

C. This was well-answered by the majority of candidates.

3.4 Conclusions

- The 2007 paper was well-received and was seen as an appropriate test of a broad range of knowledge and skills.
- Many answers lacked adequate development of points of argument.
- Many answers did not focus on what was required by a question.
- Many candidates showed an inadequate knowledge of case-studies required by the syllabus.
- Skills in the use of Ordnance Survey maps need to be generally improved.
- Skills of data analysis were often weak.

3.5 Recommendations for Teachers and Students

- The examination papers test the knowledge and skills specified in the syllabus document. Consequently, it is of the utmost importance that the Junior Certificate course in Geography is taught with full reference to the published syllabus. Study of a number of case studies is required by the syllabus
- Candidates should familiarise themselves with the layout and rubrics of the examination paper. They should read each question carefully and ensure that they are responding precisely to what is asked of them
- Candidates should be encouraged to develop points of argument, where required
- Examples should be given in answers, where appropriate
- It should be noted that sketch-maps should be drawn with a frame and, where appropriate, a key/legend
- Candidates should develop the required skills in using Ordnance Survey extracts: grid references, distance measurement and calculating area
- With regard to referring to locations on oblique aerial photographs, it should be noted that the system recommended by the State Examinations Commission for its examinations is the following:

Left Background	Centre Background	Right Background
Left Middleground	Centre Middleground	Right Middleground
Left Foreground	Centre Foreground	Right Foreground