



JUNIOR CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION

2000

GEOGRAPHY

HIGHER AND ORDINARY LEVELS

CHIEF EXAMINER'S REPORT

HIGHER LEVEL

INTRODUCTION

The Junior Certificate Geography Higher Level Assessment takes the form of a 2 hour written examination. The examination is divided into 2 Sections. Section 1 contains 20 short questions within a separate folder. It is allocated 60 marks. Section 2 contains 5 'long' questions from which the candidate is expected to select three. This Section is allocated 90 marks i.e. 30 marks per question. The total mark for the examination is 150.

PERFORMANCE OF CANDIDATES

43,553 candidates sat the examination and the breakdown of results was as follows:

A	B	C	D	E	F	N.G.	Total
3128	13745	15703	8902	1870	201	4	43,553
7.2%	31.6%	36.0%	20.4%	4.3%	0.5%	0%	

This represented an overall A to C rate of 74.8%. This was lower than the 82-83% rate in each of the last 3 years. [Please refer to *Appendix A*].

This lower A to C rate may be accounted for by a combination of factors:

- Section 1 was more discriminating and the average score was 3 marks lower than 1999.
- Reduced scoring in the sketch map in Question 5A
- The inclusion of topics such as Polders, Soils and Weather/Climate Studies which may be given limited attention in classroom teaching.

ANALYSIS OF PAPER

SECTION 1

Section 1 [Folder] is compulsory. The average mark achieved was 44.6 out of 60 marks. While lower than recent years, it nonetheless represented an equivalent score of 74% of the total mark in this section.

The questions that presented most difficulty were:

- 1 - wind vane was often named instead of anemometer
- 2 - calculation of range of temperature was frequently incorrect
- 9 - knowledge of locational /regional geography was poor
- 10A - candidates had difficulty in identifying the anticyclone
- 11 - naming the Labrador Current caused most problems within this question
- 17 - often incorrect, with many choosing Mediterranean
- 18 – calculation of area was frequently incorrect

SECTION 2

QUESTION 1

78% of candidates attempted this question and the average mark achieved was 16 out of 30.

- A. Most candidates understood the concept of an industrial estate but very few obtained development marks. The concept was occasionally confused with 'housing estates'. While most correctly gave one advantage of an industrial estate there was considerable repetition by candidates in their answers to the 'definition' and 'advantage' of an industrial estate.
- B. Reference to a named light industry was frequently omitted whereas heavy industry featured quite commonly. Answers tended to be strong on generalisations and weak on specific information. Candidates struggled to present 2 ways in which roads are important for the development of light industry. The lack of reference to local industry by candidates was notable.
- C. This was generally well answered although some lost development marks. Others misread the question and dealt with the causes of migration and the effects on destination areas.

QUESTION 2

39% of candidates attempted this question and the average mark obtained was 17 out of 30. Candidates were required to answer three of the four parts in this question.

- A. Candidates showed a good knowledge of plate tectonics and the quality of diagrams used was high.
- B. Most candidates were able to correctly define a polder. However, answering in relation to land use and settlement on the polders was weak. Many answers failed to distinguish between land use and settlement.
- C. Candidates tended to gain only statement marks. The influence of soil on vegetation was more clearly explained than that of vegetation on soil. Many answers contained repetition.
- D. This stimulus-based question was quite well answered. Most candidates described two changes but some lost marks by their failure to explain the changes or refer to the data supplied.

Many candidates attempted all four parts of this question. This proved beneficial as parts B and C were poorly answered.

QUESTION 3

17% of candidates attempted this question although some only attempted parts B and C or indeed only part C. The average score obtained was 14 out of 30.

- A. Answers were generally very poor.
- B. There was very little reference to warm or cold front. Many candidates did not understand the concept of weather changes within a depression.

- C. This scored better but development marks were often lost. Candidates fared best when dealing with rainfall in Ireland, compared to the influence of the South Westerlies on temperature or the varying weather conditions in the Mediterranean.
- D. This was the best answered part of this question. However, some candidates lost marks by naming a country rather than a region, while others described the impact of tourism.

QUESTION 4

88% of candidates attempted this question and the average mark obtained was 17 out of 30.

- A. Many answers obtained maximum marks although some lost marks due to a lack of development or incorrect map references.
- B. The distance calculated was often incorrect.
Most answers correctly identified the south as being the easier slope. However, many tended to lose half of the development marks due to repetition of information already supplied in the question.
- C. There was a notable variation in the quality of answers to this part of the question. Problems in answering included confusion between features of erosion and deposition, an inability to correctly identify features on the map and concentration on one type of feature only.

QUESTION 5

81% of candidates attempted this question and the average mark obtained was 16 out of 30.

- A. The sketch map generally scored well. Locating the “ abbey in ruins”, and to a lesser extent the “footbridge and modern housing estate”, presented most difficulty. A small number of candidates drew a sketch map based on the O.S. map and thereby lost 12 marks.
- B. Most answers only achieved statement marks. Answers on the influence of the river on the town’s development were frequently superficial. There was a distinct lack of reference to map and photograph evidence.
- C. Many answers lacked photograph reference. The reasons in favour of the proposal to widen the road were frequently limited to a repetition of the question. As a consequence, marks were lost.

OVERALL COMMENTARY

The main points of interest arising from an analysis of the candidates’ answers are:

- ◆ Lack of development within answers.
- ◆ Inadequate coverage of the syllabus.
- ◆ Lack of use of local knowledge.
- ◆ The strong popularity of Questions 1, 4 and 5.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TEACHERS

In order to improve classroom teaching and examination preparation, it is recommended that teachers study this report in conjunction with the marking scheme. Arising from this they should bring the following to the attention of their students:

1. ***Read questions carefully.*** There were many cases of candidates not reading questions carefully. For example, Question 5A asked candidates to draw a sketch map using the photograph. A minority of students lost 12 marks by drawing a sketch map of the O.S. map.
2. ***Develop one's answers.*** The failure to do so is the single most important reason why candidates lose marks. The marking scheme is largely based on the concepts of "***Statement and Development***". It is important to emphasise the need for simple logical development of descriptive or explanatory points in homework and classroom teaching.
3. ***Use map/photo evidence.*** Failure to make appropriate use of the map/photo is a very common problem. The answers to map or photograph questions are to be found on the map or photograph. Therefore, students need to be constantly encouraged to use information from them to support answers. The location of such evidence on the map or photo should be stated clearly. It should be noted that reference to location on the map might be in the form of a description of location, compass directions or grid references. On the photograph, locational references should be given in relation to the zones, right-background, left-foreground etc.
4. ***Use local studies.*** The importance of local studies is emphasised in the Geography Syllabus. The use of local examples helps illustrate geographical concepts. The simple use of local examples or information could have aided candidates in Questions 1A, 1B and 2B this year.

APPENDIX A

Higher Level Percentage Grade Results : 1995-2000

Year	A	B	C	D	E	F	N.G	A-C	D	E-N.G
2000	7.2	31.6	36.0	20.4	4.3	0.5	0	74.8	20.4	4.8
1999	8.6	38.5	35.9	15.1	1.8	0.1	0	83.0	15.1	1.9
1998	9.8	37.2	35.6	15.3	2.0	0.1	0	82.6	15.3	2.1
1997	9.0	36.4	37.6	15.3	1.6	0.1	0	83.0	15.3	1.7
1996	8.8	32.1	34.3	20.3	4.0	0.5	0	75.2	20.3	4.5
1995	8.2	29.7	34.8	22.5	4.4	0.4	0	72.7	22.5	4.8

ORDINARY LEVEL

1. INTRODUCTION

Assessment in Junior Certificate Geography at Ordinary Level, consists of a 2 hour written examination. The examination is divided into 2 sections. The structure of the examination is outlined below.

Structure: **Section 1** - 20 questions @ 3 marks each = Maximum 60 marks
 Section 2 - 3 ex 5 questions @ 30 marks each = Maximum 90 marks
 Maximum Score = 150 marks

SECTION 1

The Folder contains twenty questions and is awarded sixty (60) marks or 40% of the whole examination. Four of the twenty questions present the candidates with a choice. Candidates may answer both parts of these questions. Each question carries three (3) marks. Most of the questions are of the multiple-choice type. The content of the questions ranges over the entire course.

SECTION 2

Section 2 contains five multi-part questions of equal value. Each question is marked out of thirty (30) marks. Candidates are required to answer three (3) questions for a total of ninety (90) marks. All questions may be answered with the highest three (3) scores being credited. Section two accounts for 60% of the examination.

2. PERFORMANCE

The results in 2000 were somewhat lower than those for 1999 as shown in the table below.

Year	A	B	C	D	E	F	N/G	>D	D	<D
2000	7.77	32.74	31.36	20.69	5.55	1.83	0.06	71.87	20.69	7.45
1999	10.1	35.8	32.0	17.0	4.0	1.1	0.02	77.9	17.0	5.1
1998	7.5	28.4	33.2	23.6	5.6	1.6	0.03	69.2	23.6	7.3

The main reason for this was the relatively poor performance of candidates in Section 1 - the folder. The response from the candidates resulted in a low average score namely 38.6 marks out of 60 contrasting with an average of 45.2 for 1999, 43.2 for 1998 and 47.9 for 1997.

Section 2 of the paper was not answered as well as in previous years. Candidates seem less inclined to develop answers. Responses to questions tended to involve mere statements with little further explanation. It was clear that questions were not read with sufficient care as answers frequently dealt with only one aspect of a topic where two or more had been specified in the wording.

3. ANALYSIS OF CANDIDATES' RESPONSES

3.1 PREFERENCE OF CANDIDATES FOR VARIOUS QUESTIONS

The popularity of the different questions showed a better balance than in previous years.

Question	Popularity	Average Mark
1	69%	12.2
2	70%	15.4
3	78%	15.5
4	70%	18.2
5	57%	18.6
Folder	100%	38.6

3.2 Quality of candidates' responses to each question

Section 1- The Folder

Q.1	Rocks:	A majority got this correct.
Q.2	Weathering:	Less than half got this correct.
Q.3	(a) Coastal:	A majority got this right.
	(b) Glacial:	This was less popular. Most answers were correct.
Q.4	Weather:	A majority got this right.
Q.5	Weather Map:	Less than half got this right.
Q.6	Land reclamation:	A small majority were correct.
Q.7	Population:	A small majority got this right.
Q.8	Soil:	Approximately half got this right.
Q.9	Energy:	A small majority got this correct.
Q.10	(a) Industry:	Approximately half got this correct.
	(b) Aid:	Only a minority got this right.
Q.11	(a) Numerical Skills:	A small majority got this right.
	(b) Numerical Skills:	A majority got this right.
Q.12	Graph:	A majority scored at least 2 out of 3 marks here.
Q.13	Economic Activities:	Approximately half got this right.
Q.14	Natural Regions:	Very few got this right.
Q.15	Urban Traffic:	Approximately half got this right.
Q.16	Ordnance Survey:	Less than half got this correct.
Q.17	Ordnance Survey:	Approximately half got this right.
Q.18	Ordnance Survey:	Half got this right.

- Q.19 Developing Countries: A large majority got this correct.
Q.20 (a) Functions in Towns: A majority got this correct.
(b) Peat: Less than half got this right.

Candidates had particular difficulty in answering questions 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17 and 18 in Section 1.

Three of these were Ordnance Survey based, featuring Grid References/Direction and Altitude.

Candidates also experienced difficulty in answering questions based on Physical Geography.

SECTION 2

Q.1 Physical Geography and Climate

The mean score was 12.2 and the popularity rating was 69%.

- (a) The majority scored at least 5 out of 8 marks with many getting full marks. The Water Cycle was understood by most. Many candidates had difficulty in describing condensation.
- (b) The standard of answering was low. Very few scored full marks. The majority described just one feature. Diagrams were few. Waterfall was the most common feature chosen and when presented was well done. A considerable number of candidates presented coastal features. Many ignored this part of the question altogether.
- (c) Less than half managed to get half marks here. A substantial majority did not attempt it at all. Those who scored well mentioned Ireland's position relative to the Equator/North Pole, the Atlantic or the fact that Ireland is an island. In general explanations were of a poor standard.

Q.2 Economic Activities: Attempt ANY THREE from (a), (b), (c), (d)

- (a) *Mixed Farming*: This was part was well answered. Most candidates gained the maximum score for their answers in relation to this part of the question. Very little was expected by way of development. Stating of the inputs and outputs of farming was awarded full marks.
- (b) *Fishing*: The question on Fishing was well answered. A majority got 5 or 10 marks ex 10. Candidates wrote about radar, net size and the dangers of extinction of species.
- (c) *A Factory*: This was answered well though a large minority did not name a specific factory. The part of the answer dealing with Inputs and Outputs was well done. Candidates had difficulty in dealing with Processes.
- (d) *Tertiary Activities*: This topic was well answered. Many scored maximum marks.

Q.3 People on the Move

- (a) This attracted a high % of candidates, but scores were low. Most named the Push factors correctly. The naming of three Pull factors was a major problem. Some appeared confused by the signpost on the cartoon. Approximately half got full marks.
- (b) Less than half got full marks here. Some excellent answers described problems of farms being abandoned, shop-closures, falling school numbers and failure to attract industry. These were the exceptions. A large number failed to grasp the thrust of the question.
- (c) Approximately one third scored full marks here. Many candidates had difficulty in interpreting the question. All those who understood the question did very well. The examples given in the question seemed to cause problems even though both are specified in the syllabus.

Q.4 Ordnance Survey

The quality of the sketch maps was excellent. The vast majority scored 10, 11 or 12 ex 12.

- (a)
 - (i) Less than 20% got the distance correct.
 - (ii) The vast majority got one reason correct here scoring 3 ex 6. Very few got the second reason correct.
- (b) This was very well answered. It was a practical question and elicited a very good response. Candidates seemed to enjoy this unusual method of testing their map-reading skills. Many drew a post-card complete with stamp. The Geographical information was valid.

Q.5 Photograph

- (a) Identification of building was good, but many candidates had difficulty in describing the location of the buildings.
- (b) Reasons for living in a particular place were given by a majority of candidates and the explanation of their choice was very logical. A large majority gained high marks in this part of the question.
- (c) This was well answered. Many good suggestions for improving the town were given. These included parking facilities, playgrounds and new housing.

4. OVERALL GENERAL COMMENT

The standard of answering was lower than in previous years. This was especially true of the answers to Section1-The Folder. Physical Geography and specific Map Reading skills present special difficulties.

Some candidates wrote very little by way of development. Reasons for this may be absence of information in relation to parts of the course, failure to read instructions and/or to follow same, misinterpretation of questions or a combination of all three.

Certain topics appear to engage Ordinary Level candidates, specifically those that relate to their experience. This was evident in the Photograph question. The opposite was evident in the Physical Geography question.

Ordnance Survey questions were well answered when non-technical information was sought.

5. **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TEACHERS AND STUDENTS**

Study the entire course

It is essential that every effort is made to range over the entire course as the Folder questions do just that. Section 2 questions often range widely across the course also and if questions are to be attempted in their entirety a broad knowledge of the course is essential.

Read questions carefully

Candidates must be encouraged to read the questions carefully. Too many ignore such instructions as “Give TWO reasons” or “Name an EXAMPLE”.

*Attempt **all** parts of questions*

Candidates must be encouraged to attempt all parts of questions when required to do so. Too many leave out parts of questions and marks are lost as a result.

Develop answers

The most difficult task for candidates appears to be to develop answers. Answers tend to be short with no reference being made to case studies. Instructions such as “explain”, “discuss”, “write about” all indicate that marks are available for such extra information. One is left with the impression that candidates always know a little more, but do not write it down.