Candidates' Performance

Paper 1

Section A

There are 40 multiple-choice questions in this paper. The average number of questions answered correctly by candidates was 26. The overall performance of the candidates was satisfactory.

The following table lists some weaknesses of this year's candidates:

Question Number	Candidates' Performance
3	Only 27% of candidates were able to choose the key, while 54% wrongly chose B. It is likely candidates choosing option B calculated the average gradient of the section of Chun Wah Road using the straight line distance between the two spot heights instead of the actual length of the road.

In conclusion, candidates should:

1. improve their map reading skills;

2. study the information given in the questions in greater detail;

3. improve their understanding on local and global issues; and

4. enhance their basic geographical knowledge.

Paper 1

Section B

Question Number	Popularity %	Performance in General
1. (a) (i)	38	Good. Most candidates were able to identify the two features.
(ii)		Good. Most candidates, especially those taking the English version paper, were able to explain the formation of the wave-cut platform with a series of annotated diagrams. A few candidates separated annotations from the diagrams. Some candidates wrongly stated that the collapse of the roof of a notch formed the sea cliff.
(iii)		Well answered. Most candidates were able to explain the formation of the beach with photograph evidence.
(b) (i)		Fair. Some candidates wrongly identified the man-made structure as sea wall. The use of wrong Chinese characters was quite common in the Chinese version paper.
(ii)		Good. Most candidates were able to explain the advantages of the breakwater.
(iii)		Poor. Most candidates argued the effectiveness of mangrove in reducing erosion on one side only. Many candidates focused their evaluation on the cost and feasibility of growing mangrove instead of the effectiveness of planting mangrove as an alternative coastal management strategy.
2. (a) (i)	66	Good. Most candidates were able to state the advantages of plant X.
(ii)		Satisfactory. Many candidates were able to state the problems faced by plant X.
(b) (i)		Poor. Many candidates were not able to quote relevant map or photograph evidence to justify their answers.
(ii)		Fair. Many candidates were able to identify the availability of coalfields and iron ores but described them as resources rather than raw materials. Some candidates were able to identify the establishment of the plant in 1951 to explain the industrial inertia.
(c) (i)		Poor. Many candidates made a contrast on the crude steel production instead of the growth trends of production between regions A and B. Some candidates just listed out the figures without calculating the growth trends of regions A and B. Some candidates misinterpreted the data and wrongly stated that the growth rate of region A was higher than region B.
(ii)		Poor. Some candidates were not able to contrast the figures in question (c) (i) and gave wrong explanations. Some candidates placed too much emphasis in explaining the phenomenon in one region only. Many candidates have limited knowledge of the 'Go West' Policy.

Question Number	Popularity %	Performance in General
3. (a) (i)	28	Good. Most candidates were able to identify the land use correctly.
(ii)		Fair. Some candidates were not able to identify the land use correctly while many candidates focused on describing how air quality could be improved. Some candidates concentrated on the discussion of the solar panels on the roof top of the building in the photograph as an important alternate energy source.
(iii)		Fair. Most candidates were able to list the map evidence for high accessibility. However, only few candidates quoted 'straight coastline' as evidence of reclamation. Some candidates wrongly considered nearby industrial land use as a means that would give rise to industrial agglomeration.
(b) (i)		Fair. Many candidates were able to explain how the two projects may speed up the land use changes. However, some answers were too general. Some candidates had no idea of what a cruise terminal was and considered it as a ferry pier for daily transport of goods and passengers.
(ii)		Fair. Many candidates were able to mention both the positive and negative impact of the land use changes. However, some answers were too general in discussing the impact on Hong Kong only and not the residents of East Kowloon in specific.
4. (a) (i)	68	Fair. Many candidates were able to describe the two trends. However, some candidates did not read the graph carefully and gave wrong figures in describing the trends.
(ii)		Fair. Many candidates described rather than explained the relationship.
(iii)		Good. Most candidates were able to list the negative environmental impact such as soil, climate, etc.
(b)		Poor. Most candidates wrongly interpreted 'ecological characteristics' and included the characteristics of human factors in their answers.
(c)		Poor. Many candidates were not able to evaluate the effectiveness of reforestation. Most candidates were not able to compare the size of total reforested area with the loss of forested areas. Only few candidates were able to consider the socio-economic conditions or the limitations of the Brazilian government in conserving the forest areas in their evaluation.

Paper 1

Section C

Question Number	Popularity %	Performance in General
5	34	Satisfactory. Many candidates were able to explain the occurrence of the three types of tectonic hazards, but failed to relate them to the Circum-Pacific belt as stated in the question. Many candidates failed to mention the names of plates surrounding the Pacific Ocean except the Eurasian Plate and Pacific Plate, hence failed to relate the tectonic hazards with associated plate boundaries. Some candidates included irrelevant answers, such as 'hot spot volcanoes', 'volcanic islands along mid-oceanic ridge', etc. when explaining the hazards at the constructive plate boundary. Some candidates had limited knowledge on land use zoning and thus included all kinds of measures which could help to reduce the impact of tectonic hazards in their answers.
6	35	Fair. Most candidates failed to address all the aspects of the physical environment, i.e. atmosphere, hydrosphere, lithosphere and biosphere, in Sahel. Some candidates misinterpreted physical environmental characteristics as those under the impact of nomadism. A small number of candidates mixed up the physical environment of Sahel with the tropical rainforest, or misinterpreted nomadism as cattle ranching. Many candidates provided only perfunctory answers in the second part of the question by repeating the adverse physical environment of Sahel and elucidating the general cultural constraints there, such as poor government policy and poverty. Most candidates concentrated their discussion on the physical and soil constraints on arable farming only. Some candidates mentioned the use of agricultural technology, irrigation and genetically modified food, etc. regardless of arable farming. Few candidates were able to focus their discussion on arable farming in the context of Sahel. Only a few candidates were able to have an in-depth discussion involving views from the two opposite sides on whether arable farming is a better way to increasing food supply.
7	32	Poor. Most candidates recalled knowledge from textbooks rather than describing the adverse impact of global warming in Hong Kong. Some candidates wrongly referred to heat island effect and intensified air pollution problem when answering this part. Some candidates confused the concepts of 'global warming' with 'greenhouse effect'. Some candidates did not understand the meaning of 'urban greening' and misinterpreted it as sustainable or green city design by wrongly mentioning 'renewable energy resources' and 'mass transit system' in their discussion. Some candidates mistook 'urban greening' as 'reforestation'. Others wrongly associated it with 'land use zoning' or 'creating more open space'.

General comments and recommendations

1. Candidates should pay attention to the wording, especially the key terms, in the question to avoid misinterpretation.

2. Candidates should apply geographical concepts and use geographical terminology in answering the questions.

3. Candidates should practise more their geographical skills, including map reading, photograph and graph interpretation.

4. Candidates should practise more their skills of drawing annotated diagrams, especially the correct placement of the annotations.

5. Candidates should be more familiar with current issues and not just rely on textbook knowledge.

Paper 2

Section D

Question Number	Popularity %	Performance in General
1. (a) (i) & (ii)	33	Good. Most candidates were able to identify the major reclamation areas. However, candidates were generally weak with spatial distribution concept and a majority of them were not able to describe the distribution pattern. Most candidates were able to use examples to describe the modification of coastal areas brought about by reclamation but some candidates were not able to spell the names of places accurately. A few candidates focused wrongly on the ecological impact.
(b) (i) & (ii)		Good. Although some candidates were not able to give the accurate terms of reclamation materials, most candidates were able to explain the environmental impact brought about by the dredging of marine sand. However, some candidates wrongly stated that dumped marine sand floating in the reclamation areas was the major cause of water pollution. A few outstanding candidates were able to explain the environmental impact of the two types of materials respectively.
(c)		Satisfactory. Most candidates were able to identify accurately the rock type of the site. Candidates were able to discuss generally the influence of granite and fault lines on rock cavern development. However, quite a number of candidates in the Chinese version wrote the Chinese characters of granite wrongly. Some candidates also wrongly interpreted granite as soft rock because of its high susceptibility to weathering, or confused the concepts of 'weathering', 'erosion' and 'mass movement'.
2. (a)	24	Good. The majority of candidates were able to interpret weather charts generally. They were able to compare the weather conditions of the two places but a small number of candidates failed to give the accurate units, especially in temperature and wind speed. Quite a number of candidates were not able to state accurately the atmospheric pressure of Qingdao which lies between two isobars.
(b) (i) & (ii)		Good. The majority of candidates were able to use latitudinal variation in explaining the difference in temperature of the two places. However, some candidates confused the concepts of 'angle of the sun' and 'angle of incidence'. Candidates were less competent in explaining the difference in wind speed compared to (b) (i). Only a small number of candidates were able to explain the difference in pressure gradient and thus wind speed of the two places from the spacing of isobars in the figure.
(c) (i) & (ii)		Satisfactory. A high percentage of candidates were able to account for the changes in duration of sunlight brought about by the passing of a cold front in Hong Kong. However, most of them were weak in explaining the relationship of temperature and relative humidity. Some candidates were not familiar with the concept of winter monsoon blowing offshore from the interior of cold dry continent.

Question Number	Popularity %	Performance in General
3. (a) (i) & (ii)	25	Fair. Although almost all candidates were able to identify the problem as traffic congestion, few made reference to 'bottleneck', 'lack of railway' and 'poor transport planning', etc. Candidates were generally unfamiliar with the concept of 'commuting'. Many candidates were only able to give perfunctory explanation of the causes of traffic congestion but failed to make good use of the information provided to give an in-depth and comprehensive account of the transport problem. There were also quite a number of candidates who misinterpreted Route 1 as the Cross Harbour Tunnel and therefore focused on explaining the causes of the Cross Harbour Tunnel congestion instead.
(b) (i) & (ii)		Good. Most candidates were able to describe the advantages of a mass transit system. A few candidates had a good concept of transport network and linkage. The majority of candidates were able to identify the general problems of traffic diversion and blocking during the construction of South Island Line.
(c)		Poor. Candidates were generally unfamiliar with the transport management measure of 'park and ride'. Many candidates were only able to use a general concept of car park location in their explanations.
4. (a) (i) & (ii)	17	Good. Most candidates were able to use map information to describe the general advantages of industrial development in Guangzhou. A high proportion of candidates were able to account for the declining importance of the industries with reference to factors such as increasing costs, environmental concern and government policies, etc.
(b)		Excellent. Most candidates had good knowledge of the environmental conditions favourable to the development of hi-tech industries.
(c) (i) & (ii)		Good. A high proportion of candidates were able to point out the impact of industrial changes in Guangzhou on employment structure, living environment and economic growth.

Paper 2

Section E

Question Number	Popularity %	Performance in General
5	32	Satisfactory. Most candidates were able to use geographical terms like 'denudation', 'sedimentation' and 'cementation', etc. to explain how igneous rocks change to sedimentary rocks in the rock cycle. However, candidates were less competent in explaining the processes that change sedimentary rocks into igneous rocks. Many candidates inaccurately used metamorphic process instead of melting of sedimentary rock at subduction zone in their explanations. A few candidates did not have a clear concept of the rock cycle. They wrongly considered metamorphism as an essential process in the rock cycle. Most candidates were able to identify the major igneous rock types and describe their distribution in Hong Kong. A large number of candidates were able to describe the general characteristics of intrusive and extrusive igneous rocks and were able to explain generally the influence of them in the shaping of landforms. However, many of them were relatively weak in discussing the influence of sedimentary rocks in this aspect. Some candidates gave irrelevant explanation of erosional coastal landforms. A small number of candidates misinterpreted the question. Their discussion focused only on the percentage of area covered by different types of rock but failed to discuss the importance of these rocks in 'shaping the landforms'.
6	28	Satisfactory. A high proportion of candidates were able to point out dryness as the major factor leading to sandstorms in North China. Some candidates were able to explain in detail the climatic condition in spring that favoured the formation of sandstorms. However, quite a number of candidates did not show adequate understanding of the semi-arid climate in the region. They were only able to explain the causes of dryness in North China briefly. Some explained in detail other factors, for example, the source of sand, which was irrelevant to the question. Candidates should explain more about the interrelationship of dryness, vegetation and strong winds. Some candidates were not able to differentiate the concepts of 'desertification' and 'sandstorms'. Most candidates were able to discuss generally human activities, for example, over-cultivation in worsening desertification and thus increasing the intensity of sandstorms but very often they missed discussing the role of human activities in reducing the intensity of sandstorms. In general, candidates had general knowledge of the geographical setting of North China region only. Some candidates were not able to delimit the region accurately and some of them mistook North China as a desert region. Many candidates were only able to describe ambiguously the human activities in North China region. All candidates would benefit from having a better understanding of the strategies adopted in North China to alleviate sandstorms.

Question Number	Popularity %	Performance in General
7	11	Fair. Most candidates were able to point out the recent keen competition from Zhujiang Delta region as the major threat to Hong Kong's logistics industry. However, only some candidates were able to discuss it in depth. Some candidates were not aware of the internal problems faced by the logistics industry. A few candidates did not show a basic understanding of problems faced by the logistics industry in Hong Kong. They were only able to mention the recent strike at the container terminal. An overwhelming majority of candidates did not have a clear understanding of the high value-added logistics services. Most candidates mixed up 'high value-added goods' or 'high value-added industries' with 'high value-added logistics services'. Only a very small number of candidates were able to identify 'air transport service' or 'use of IT in management of logistics flow' as examples of high value-added logistics services. Most candidates were only able to give a vague discussion of factors favourable for logistics development in Hong Kong. Candidates should be more aware of the recent development of logistics industry in Hong Kong.
8	29	Fair. A high percentage of candidates were able to give only a brief account of the regional air pollution problem. Most of them were able to identify rapid industrial development of Zhujiang Delta Region as the major cause of regional air pollution problem, but many failed to see how Hong Kong contributed to the problem of regional air pollution. Candidates also generally showed poor understanding of regional air quality problems in terms of the types and sources of air pollutants and the resultant problems. Some candidates even mixed up the concepts of 'air pollution' and 'global warming'. Although most candidates were able to point out wind as the carrier of pollutants across the border, some of them did not have a clear concept of the monsoon wind directions in the Zhujiang Delta Region. A few wrongly stated exhausted gases emitted from cross-border vehicles as the major cause of the cross-border air pollution problem. A high proportion of candidates were only able to give some vague and general local measures, e.g. education, legislation, etc. They should explain concrete and feasible cooperative measures involving both governments. They should also use appropriate geographical terms or specific technical terms when answering question. For those who attempted to explain the cooperation of the two governments, many of them did not have an accurate understanding of the relationship of Guangdong province and the HKSAR and the technological level of Guangdong. They misinterpreted cooperation as HKSAR's monitoring, coaching or even punishing the enterprises in Guangdong.

General comments and recommendations

1. Candidates generally showed improvement in time management and interpretation of wordings used in the questions.

2. Candidates should have a solid foundation and understanding of geographical concepts. They should avoid giving general, perfunctory and inappropriate explanations, especially in short essay questions.

3. Candidates were generally weak in spatial concept.

4. Candidates should use accurate and specific geographical terms when answering questions. They should also pay more attention to the spelling of these terms.