Paper 1 Section A

There were 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.

In Item 16, about two thirds of candidates wrongly chose Option D as the answer. They might have misinterpreted 'wave frequency' as a factor affecting the magnitude of wave energy, when in fact it is the other way around.

Q.16   Which of the following are factors affecting the magnitude of wave energy?

    (1)   wave frequency
    (2)   wind speed
    (3)   fetch

      A.   (1) and (2) only   (6%)
      B.   (1) and (3) only   (3%)
    *C.   (2) and (3) only   (29%)
      D.   (1), (2) and (3)   (62%)

In Item 19, about half of the candidates wrongly chose Option C as the answer. They might have misinterpreted 'stricter carbon emission control in the USA', which had no significant effect on the relocation of the IT industry, as a push factor causing IT plants to relocate from the USA to China.

Q.19   Which of the following is (are) the push factor(s) causing IT plants to relocate from the USA to China since 2000?

    (1)   rising labour costs in the USA
    (2)   stricter carbon emission control in the USA
    (3)   more government incentives in China

    *A.   (1) only   (25%)
      B.   (3) only   (11%)
      C.   (1) and (2) only   (52%)
      D.   (2) and (3) only   (12%)

In Item 30, a similar number of candidates chose Options A and D as the answer. Option D included 'small annual range of temperature' which is not the climatic characteristic of Southern California.
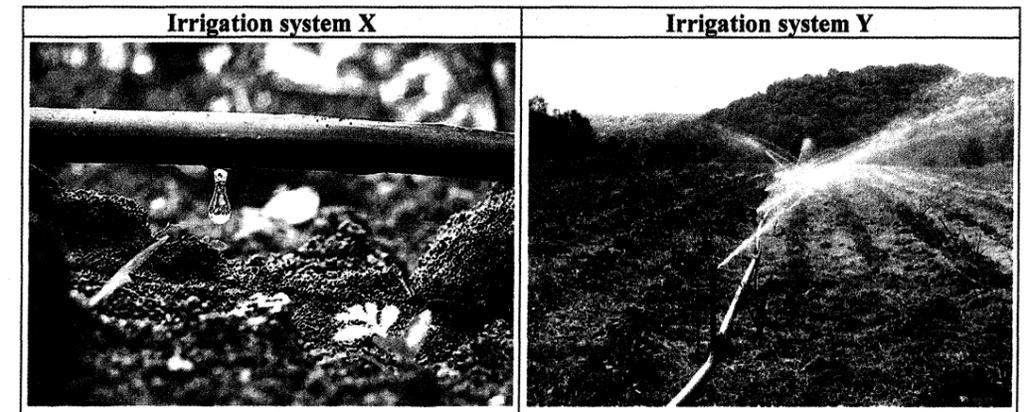
Q.30   Which of the following descriptions about the physical environment of Southern California are correct?

    (1)   semi-arid to arid climate
    (2)   rainfall decreasing generally towards inland
    (3)   small annual range of temperature

    *A.   (1) and (2) only   (30%)
      B.   (1) and (3) only   (17%)
      C.   (2) and (3) only   (24%)
      D.   (1), (2) and (3)   (29%)

In Item 31, a similar number of candidates chose Options C and D as the answer. Those who wrongly chose Option C might have missed the fact that irrigation system X (drip irrigation) inputs much less amount of water than irrigation system Y (sprinkler irrigation), thus the amount of infiltration by drip irrigation is also less than that by sprinkler irrigation.

Q.31   Refer to the photographs below which show irrigation systems X and Y.

Irrigation system X	Irrigation system Y

Which of the following descriptions of irrigation systems X and Y are correct?

		Irrigation system X	Irrigation system Y
(1)	Amount of infiltration	less	more
(2)	Amount of water wastage	less	more
(3)	Risk of salinization	lower	higher

      A.   (1) and (2) only   (11%)
      B.   (1) and (3) only   (1%)
      C.   (2) and (3) only   (44%)
    *D.   (1), (2) and (3)   (44%)

In Item 32, about half of the candidates wrongly chose Option D as the answer. Candidates might have misinterpreted location (3), the East African Highlands as the extension of location (2), whereas the area of rainforests in location (4) is the smallest when compared with locations (1) and (2).

Q.32   Refer to the figure below.

Which of the following locations in the above figure has the smallest area of tropical rainforests?

A. (1)   (10%)
B. (2)   (20%)
*C. (3)   (21%)
D. (4)   (49%)

In Item 39, most candidates wrongly chose Option B as the answer. They might have misinterpreted the building design as 'to enhance the absorption of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere' by the plants grown on the walls. The actual purpose of the building design is to reduce heat absorbed by the building, thus reducing energy consumed through the use of air-conditioning.

Q.39   Refer to the photograph below which shows a building design.

Which of the following is (are) the purpose(s) of the design shown in the above photograph?

(1) to reduce energy consumption
(2) to enhance the absorption of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere
(3) to lower maintenance costs of the building

*A. (1) only   (25%)
B. (2) only   (69%)
C. (1) and (3) only (2%)
D. (2) and (3) only (4%)

Paper 1 Section B

Question Number		Popularity %	Performance in General
1. (a)		75	Good. Many candidates were able to identify correctly the locations of the epicentres, especially those around the Circum-Pacific Belt, shown in Figure 1a. However, some candidates wrongly described the locations of the epicentres at the constructive plate boundaries.
(b)	(i)		Fair. Many candidates were not able to compare the causes of tsunamis at X and Y. Instead they discussed the two causes separately. Some candidates were not able to contrast the differences of the causes of tsunamis at X and Y. Their knowledge on the cause of tsunami at Y was limited.
	(ii)		Fair. Some candidates only described the wave height at Y without explaining its causes. Some candidates misinterpreted tsunami as a destructive wave and applied irrelevant factors, such as fetch, to support their answers.
(c)	(i)		Good. Most candidates were able to explain the difference in death toll between X and Y in the tsunamis.
	(ii)		Fair. Many candidates were able to evaluate the effectiveness of 'land use zoning'. However, some candidates only briefly quoted examples of 'land use zoning' without detailed explanations. Some candidates quoted irrelevant examples unrelated to 'land use zoning', including earthquake-proof structures, evacuation routes, etc. Only a few candidates were able to elaborate further the effectiveness of 'land use zoning', e.g. lowering the population density along the coast, the setting up of a buffer zone to help reduce damage brought about by a tsunami, etc.
2. (a)	(i)	25	Satisfactory. Most candidates were able to describe the changes in river velocity from sites 1 to 7.
	(ii)		Fair. Most candidates were able to explain the changes in river velocity from sites 1 to 4, sites 4 to 5 and sites 5 to 7. Some candidates were not able to quote map evidence in their answers, or wrongly explained the changes in river velocity with gradient changes.
(b)	(i)		Good. Most candidates were able to calculate the discharge at site 7 correctly.
	(ii)		Satisfactory. Many candidates were able to describe and explain the downstream changes in channel width in terms of discharge and river processes.
	(iii)		Poor. Many candidates were not able to quote map evidence to explain the favourable physical conditions for the formation of depositional features.

	Question Number		Popularity %	Performance in General
3.	(a)	(i)	43	Good. Most candidates were able to describe the distribution patterns of low density residential land use and commercial land use. More able candidates managed to state the location of the two types of land uses in the reclamation area.
		(ii)		Good. Many candidates were able to explain the merits of the distribution patterns of low class residential land use and commercial land use in detail.
	(b)			Poor. Many candidates wrongly explained area X as a better site for new town development instead of the more suitable reclamation site given in the question. Some candidates were only able to list the locational and site advantages of area X without making a comparison with area Y. Some candidates were also not able to quote correct map evidence in their answers.
	(c)			Fair. Many candidates were only able to define sustainable development. Some candidates simply copied the information from Table 3b as the answer, without discussing whether the land use planning of area X aligns with the principles of sustainable development.
4.	(a)	(i)	58	Poor. Many candidates did not calculate the area of sea ice extent.
		(ii)		Poor. Many candidates gave incorrect answers.
	(b)	(i)		Fair. Most candidates were able to describe and explain the relationship between the amount of carbon dioxide emission and the areal change of sea ice extent. Many candidates confused the concepts of solar radiation and terrestrial radiation. Some candidates did not demonstrate a clear understanding of the relationship between the increase in carbon dioxide emission and the intensification of greenhouse effect as well as global warming. Some candidates wrongly explained the melting of ice cap or glaciers instead of the areal change of sea ice extent in the question.
		(ii)		Fair. Many candidates showed limited knowledge of the positive impact of melting sea ice. Some candidates gave answers irrelevant to the melting of sea ice, such as a rise in sea-levels, coastal flooding, lengthening of growing season, increase in crop production, etc.
	(c)			Fair. Many candidates simply copied the data from Table 4b and stated that international cooperation was ineffective in controlling global carbon dioxide emission without any explanation.

Paper 1 Section C

Question Number	Popularity %	Performance in General
5	27	Fair performance by candidates in this question. In the first part of the question, many candidates were able to state the factors affecting the spatial distribution of the iron and steel industry in China before 1978 with reasonable elaboration. Some candidates were also able to explain how government policies affected the location of iron and steel industry in the inland region. More able candidates were able to demarcate the different stages of development before 1949, from 1949 to 1953 and in the 'Five-Year Plans'. Some candidates, however, focused only on describing and explaining some factors affecting industries, such as labour force, market, etc. without making reference to the characteristic of the iron and steel industry before 1978. Most candidates did not quote appropriate examples, or quoted wrong examples. In the second part of the question, many candidates showed understanding on the distribution of the iron and steel industry in China since 1978, but were not able to relate the distribution of the iron and steel industry with the 'Reform and Opening-up' policy. Some candidates quoted wrong examples, e.g. setting up of iron and steel industries in the Zhujiang Delta Region, such as the Shenzhen Special Economic Zone, etc. Only a few candidates were able to state the relationship between the 'Go West' policy and the development of iron and steel industry as well as its distribution after 1978.
6	55	Satisfactory performance by candidates in this question. In the first part of the question, many candidates were able to explain how the physical environment, such as climatic constraints, soil characteristics, water resources, vegetation cover characteristics, etc. causes high risk of famine in the Sahel region. Many candidates were able to give a detailed description on the physical constraints in the Sahel region and how these constraints cause famine. However, some candidates suggested irrelevant human factors in their explanation. In the second part of the question, many candidates showed basic knowledge on biotechnology, such as drought-resistant, pest-resistant, etc. Some candidates were able to describe the effectiveness of biotechnology in lowering the risk of famine in general. However, few candidates were able to give detailed and in-depth explanations. On the other hand, there were individual candidates who misinterpreted biotechnology as ordinary farming technology, such as irrigation, chemical fertilisers, machinery, etc. Some candidates were able to suggest the impact of poverty and low education levels, etc. on biotechnology. Some candidates suggested the problems of using biotechnology rather than evaluating the effectiveness of biotechnology in lowering the risk of famine in the Sahel region.

Question Number	Popularity %	Performance in General
7	19	Poor performance by candidates in this question. In the first part of the question, most candidates mentioned the environmental consequences of deforestation rather than the socio-economic consequences. Although some candidates attempted to describe and explain the negative socio-economic impact, their answers were superficial and not comprehensive. In the second part of the question, many candidates misinterpreted the meaning of 'roles', thus answering the question wrongly. Some candidates placed too much emphasis on the exploitation of the tropical rainforests and the negative impact of deforestation. Only a few candidates were able to discuss the roles of more developed countries but their answers were superficial.

General comments and recommendations

1. Candidates should pay attention to the key words, especially the geographical terms, provided in the questions and study carefully the information given to avoid misinterpretation.

2. Candidates should not copy the information provided in the questions directly as their answers.

3. Candidates should apply geographical concepts and perspectives in answering the questions.

4. Candidates should master various geographical skills, including map reading, photograph and graph interpretation.

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)	27	Very good. Most candidates were able to identify the rock type.
		(ii)		Good. Most candidates were able to state the general characteristics of the rock type clearly. However, some candidates had a wrong concept that the rock could be easily weathered because of its well-jointed structure.
		(iii)		Satisfactory. Most candidates were able to describe the formation of the rock with proper use of geographical terms. However, a small number of candidates explained the formation of columnar joints or the mechanism of plate movement instead of rock formation. A few candidates mixed up the terms 'lava' and 'magma'.
	(b)	(i)		Fair. Quite a number of candidates were able to identify 'rockfall' but not many of them were able to give photograph evidence precisely and specifically. Some candidates wrongly used the warning sign in Photograph 1c as evidence of mass wasting. They should read the question more carefully.
		(ii)		Poor. A large proportion of candidates were able to describe the general natural factors of the mass wasting but only a few of them were able to apply the concept of stress and strength to explain the causes of rockfall. Many candidates confused 'mass wasting' with 'weathering' or 'rainsplash erosion'. Most candidates were not able to quote relevant photograph evidence to support their answers.
	(c)			Fair. Most candidates were able to point out the purpose and function of the measure. Many of them did not take into consideration the specific land use and environment in their discussion. Some candidates merely recited the advantages and disadvantages of different landslide mitigation measures from textbooks, thus they were not able to make reasonable judgements. It was also common to find ambiguous conclusions such as 'on one hand, it's appropriate, but on the other hand, it's not appropriate'. Candidates should make concrete judgement when asked to discuss the appropriateness of a measure.
2.	(a)	(i)	45	Excellent. Almost all candidates were able to match the data sets with the cities correctly.
		(ii)		Good. Most candidates were able to use proper geographical terms, e.g. annual range of temperature, in describing the temperature. A large proportion of candidates were able to point out latitudinal differences as the major factor causing the difference in temperature between the two cities. However, some of them were not able to give systematic explanations. Some candidates put too much emphasis on the influence of distance from the sea, and many of them failed to give proper explanations on the moderating effect of sea to temperature.

Question Number	Popularity %	Performance in General
2. (b)		Satisfactory. Most candidates were able to identify the prevailing wind pattern in summer and winter respectively. However, some of them were only able to give a brief description of monsoon, such as onshore in summer and offshore in winter. They should give a more detailed explanation on the formation of monsoons. Some candidates wrongly used the concept of shifting planetary wind belts to explain the changes in wind directions.
(c) (i)		Good. Most candidates were able to mention 'drought' or 'sandstorm' as the climatic hazard. However, a few candidates stated irrelevant hazards like typhoon.
(ii)		Satisfactory. Many candidates were able to explain the influence of offshore winds in causing drought. To score higher marks, a discussion of factors other than wind to illustrate its role in the formation of the hazard was required, especially for the explanation of sandstorm, as its causes were more complicated.
3. (a) (i)	7	Good. A high proportion of candidates were able to draw the graph correctly with appropriate labelling. However, a few candidates plotted the starting point of the curves wrongly at zero value. A few candidates did not follow the instructions to draw the graph on a piece of graph paper, using the blank space inside the answer-book instead. As a result, most of the curves were plotted inaccurately.
(ii)		Satisfactory. Most candidates were able to describe the changing importance of the two public transport modes. Some of them were able to calculate the percentage changes.
(b) (i)		Good. In general, candidates were able to mention the advantages of railways. However, quite a number of candidates explained railways as more environmental-friendly than franchised buses, instead of the increasing environmental awareness of passengers and thus expressed a preference of railways over franchised buses.
(ii)		Poor. In general, candidates were weak in spatial concepts and were not able to use proper geographical terms in describing spatial changes. Many of them simply copied the names of railways and new towns from Figure 3b.
(c)		Poor. Most candidates showed inadequate understanding of the efficiency of public transport. Many candidates were only able to give daily life examples, such as interchange facilities or concession fares. Only a small proportion of candidates were able to discuss both the competitive and complementary roles of railways and franchised buses and make sound discussions and evaluations.

Question Number	Popularity %	Performance in General
4. (a) (i)	21	Good. Most candidates were able to name the cities but some failed to calculate the difference correctly.
(ii)		Satisfactory. However, some candidates merely compared the variations of concentration among cities. They were not able to describe the spatial variations in the region appropriately.
(iii)		Fair. In general, candidates explained the general causes of air pollution but not the influences of population density, GDP per capita and location on the concentration of nitrogen dioxide. Candidates should make better use of the data and information provided in supporting their answers.
(b) (i)		Good. Most candidates were able to describe the general increase and decrease in trends. To score higher marks, they should be able to describe the extent of changes accurately.
(ii)		Satisfactory. Most candidates were able to explain the decreasing trend of the concentration of nitrogen dioxide, but only few were able to explain the simultaneous increasing trend of gross industrial output. Many candidates overlooked the non-government factors. Candidates should note that discussion of 'relative importance' should include factors other than government policy.

Paper 2 Section E

Question Number	Popularity %	Performance in General
5	40	Fair performance of candidates in this question. In explaining the occurrence of intensive weathering in granite areas in Hong Kong, candidates should not only have good understanding of the structure and chemical composition of granite, but also the influence of Hong Kong's climatic conditions on weathering. However, many candidates only described the characteristics of granite or the weathering processes. Although many candidates were able to clearly describe different physical weathering processes of rocks, many of them failed to explain the causes of intensive weathering. Only a few candidates were able to state that chemical weathering was of greater importance than physical weathering in granite areas in hot and humid environments. Some candidates confused the concept of 'weathering' with 'erosion'. In general, candidates did not show a good understanding of how weathering worked with the other denudation processes, i.e. erosion and mass movement, in shaping landforms. Only a few candidates were able to mention that intensive weathering in Hong Kong provided a large amount of weathered materials for erosion and mass movement. A high proportion of candidates did not understand the role of weathering in shaping the overall landforms in Hong Kong. Many of them gave simple and general descriptions of relief in granite areas in Hong Kong only. Some candidates merely described the formation of landform features like tors and gullies. Some candidates described the formation of coastal erosion features which was of little relevance to this question.

Question Number	Popularity %	Performance in General
6	11	Poor performance of candidates in this question. Though many candidates were able to describe the general spatial pattern of planetary wind belts, only a few were able to explain their formation clearly and systematically. Candidates were particularly weak in explaining subtropical high pressure and circumpolar low pressure belts. They should note that besides solar energy, convergence and divergence of air are important factors affecting air pressure. Some candidates drew diagrams to illustrate the planetary wind systems. However, they should note that written descriptions and explanations are essential in answering short essay questions. In general, candidates did not have the concept of global climate. A high proportion of candidates were neither able to describe the distribution of global climatic zones, nor able to describe the climatic characteristics in these zones. Quite a number of candidates attempted to explain the influence of planetary wind systems on climate. However, they were often only able to explain the influence of wind directions, i.e. onshore and offshore winds, on the regional precipitation pattern; or the seasonal shifting of planetary wind belts on the precipitation patterns of some zones, e.g. the Mediterranean region. Candidates should note that the discussion of 'relative importance' should include the influences of factors other than planetary wind systems. They should point out solar energy as the most influential factor in controlling global climate.
7	26	Fair performance of candidates in this question. Most candidates were able to describe the general factors for the development of Hong Kong as a port. In order to get higher marks, candidates should be able to describe the factors for the development of the logistics industry, e.g. communication systems and linkages, legal systems, supply chain management and technology, etc. in greater depth and breadth to show their adequate understanding on the industry. On the other hand, quite a number of candidates gave inaccurate examples to illustrate their answers, such as Yuen Long Logistics Park as an example of government support to the logistics industry. In general, candidates lacked a good understanding of the transport infrastructure development in the Zhujiang Delta Region, thus their discussions were mostly brief and superficial, which mainly focused on competition between the two regions. Not many candidates demonstrated a good understanding of relevant concepts, such as hinterland and regional cooperation. Candidates were weak in giving examples of transport infrastructure development in the Zhujiang Delta Region. Quite a number of candidates quoted irrelevant examples, such as the construction of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong High Speed Railway or a third runway of the Hong Kong International Airport, etc.

Question Number	Popularity %	Performance in General
8	22	Fair performance of candidates in this question. As this question was on the regional study of the Zhujiang Delta Region, candidates should have a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the region. However, candidates were often only able to give superficial explanations of common industrial locational factors in the first part of the question. Candidates of average performance were able to mention briefly labour shortage and rising wages, pollution control and rising land rent, etc. Only a small proportion of candidates were able to give in-depth explanations. Not many candidates were able to give recent examples of major industries in the Zhujiang Delta Region. Some candidates described challenges to developments in the Zhujiang Delta Region as a lack of capital, low education levels, lack of technology and poor infrastructure, etc. Candidates should keep themselves continuously updated with the contemporary development in the Zhujiang Delta Region. In the second part of the question, an overwhelming majority of candidates showed little understanding of 'branding strategy'. For those with a better understanding of the concept, their discussions were often about the advantages and limitations of developing brands in China. Candidates should focus their discussion on the effectiveness of the strategy in tackling the challenges by giving more concrete and relevant arguments.

General comments and recommendations

1. Candidates should refer to the information provided in answering data-based questions. They should strengthen their skills in interpreting and extracting useful data and information from graphs, photographs and maps, etc. They should also learn to apply geographical knowledge and concepts to specific situations or cases in the questions.

2. Candidates were generally weak in spatial concepts. They should learn to describe spatial distribution by using appropriate geographical terms.

3. Candidates were weak in making judgement of appropriateness or evaluating relative importance. They should strengthen their ability in reasoning and argumentation. They should learn to put forward concrete arguments and proof and state their stands clearly and logically. They should avoid giving vague and ambiguous arguments and conclusions.

4. Candidates should avoid using 'common sense' in answering questions, especially for questions in the two electives of 'Transport' and 'Regional Study of Zhujiang Delta'. They should show a solid foundation in geographical concepts in their answers and be able to use accurate and specific geographical terms. They should also be aware of the latest development in Hong Kong and the Zhujiang Delta Region.

5. Candidates should organise and present their ideas systematically, especially in answering the short essay questions.