Candidates' Performance

The average number of questions answered correctly by candidates was 12 out of the 20 multiple-choice questions. The overall performance of candidates was about the same as last year.

Paper 1 Section B

Question Number	Popularity %	Performance in General
1. (a)	100	Satisfactory. Most candidates described appropriately the general uses of some fieldwork tools. However, only a small number of candidates correctly described in detail the specific use of these tools in collecting data in this field study. Quite a number of candidates did not name the tools and instruments correctly, e.g. measuring tape, ranging rods and timer.
(b)		Fair. Many candidates suggested some drawbacks of the method of data collection, e.g. data were not collected at the same time, sites were selected arbitrarily, etc. However, some of them did not explain how these drawbacks might affect data reliability. Some candidates gave irrelevant answers. They recited some general problems of field study, such as subjective judgement, improper use of tools or malfunction of instruments, etc. while the others accounted for the extreme data collected at beach P.
(c)		Fair. Many candidates discussed with appropriate reference to the mean values. Some candidates demonstrated basic data analysis skills in field study. They correctly pointed out that the extreme data should be discarded. However, some candidates' discussions were merely based on comparing individual data sets in Table 1c.
(d)		Poor. Most candidates suggested field study topics that were too general and broad, such as environmental studies, impact of urban areas, etc. Some candidates suggested topics that were too difficult to collect data. Most candidates did not describe the appropriate methods of data collection. Many candidates listed only some instruments or indicators to be used in the field study. Some instruments named were irrelevant to their field study topics. Quite a number of candidates overlooked 'field study topic to be carried out in the area' stated in the question and suggested some methods to collect secondary data, e.g. from newspapers or websites.

	Question Number		Popularity %	Performance in General
2.	(a)	(i)	61	Good. Most candidates correctly named the two plates.
		(ii)		Good. Most candidates demonstrated adequate understanding of plate tectonics theory and tectonic hazards. However, some candidates did not study the question carefully. They either described the formation of different tectonic hazards, or only explained the occurrence of an earthquake and tsunami at city X instead of explaining why different tectonic hazards occurred at the island. Besides, some candidates did not give appropriate explanation of the occurrence of earthquake.
	(b)			Satisfactory. Most candidates extracted relevant information as evidence, e.g. depth of focus, distance from epicentre and Richter scale, etc. However, many candidates did not explain clearly how these might affect the destructive power of the hazard. Many candidates mixed up the concepts of 'intensity' and 'magnitude' of earthquakes. Some candidates explained how the shape of the bay might affect the destructive power of a tsunami. However, some of them used inaccurate descriptions such as 'shallow' or 'sheltered' bay. Candidates generally lacked 'man-land relationship' concept. Only a small number of candidates stated high housing density along the coast as a factor. Some candidates gave general and superficial explanations such as corrupt government or low technology level, etc. without appropriate analysis of the information. Quite a number of candidates gave unreasonable explanations, e.g. the earthquake occurred during rush hour or the time gap between earthquake and tsunami was too short for people to escape.
	(c)			Fair. Most candidates discussed the general uses of a warning system in reducing the total number of death in the hazards but not their effectiveness in preventing the death toll from rising after the hazards. Besides, few of them stated the difference in effectiveness between earthquake and tsunami warning systems. An overwhelming number of candidates failed to see the importance of a timely rescue. They did not refer to the information in Figure 2c, e.g. large number of collapsed buildings and the disruption of transport system, etc. Many candidates overlooked the condition 'a good warning system' as stated in the question and instead listed some general problems found in less developed countries, such as corrupt government, inadequate capital and poor knowledge, etc. It was also common to find contradictory arguments such as 'It could have prevented...' and 'It could not have prevented...' in the same discussion. Candidates should state a clear stance in drawing their conclusions.
3.	(a)	(i)	78	Good. Most candidates referred to the information given to explain the climatic constraints encountered by farming in area X. However, some candidates confused 'uneven rainfall distribution' with 'unstable rainfall', and 'potential evapotranspiration' with 'actual evapotranspiration'. Some candidates mistook average monthly rainfall as total rainfall. A small number of candidates explained the climatic characteristics of area X but not its climatic constraints.

Question Number	Popularity %	Performance in General
3. (a) (ii)		Satisfactory. Many candidates correctly identify the farming activities as shown in the photograph. However, some candidates mixed up 'nomadic herding' with 'cattle ranching', 'shifting cultivation' or 'mixed farming'. Besides, many candidates gave only a brief description of the farming routine of nomadic herding. They did not further explain how nomadic herding might adapt to the climatic constraints.
(b)		Satisfactory. Most candidates explained briefly the food shortage caused by increasing food demand due to increasing population. However, only a small number of candidates were able to explain the limitations of increasing the number of livestock with reference to the environmental constraints, e.g. unreliable rainfall and the low carrying capacity of land, etc. Some candidates confused the axes of the graph for the number of livestock and population in Figure 3b.
(c) (i)		Good. Many candidates correctly identified precision farming. However, quite a number of them lacked in-depth understanding of it. They explained only briefly how a scientific farming method might increase farming production.
(ii)		Poor. Many candidates listed only some general advantages of precision farming. They should refer to the situation in area X, discussed whether it might overcome the farming constraints and improve food supply in the area. Many candidates overlooked the condition 'by adopting this farming management method' stated in the question and recited some limitations that hinder adoption of the advanced farming method in less developed countries, e.g. inadequate capital, low technological level and civil war, etc. Candidates should also state clearly their stance of 'whether' or 'not' in their conclusion.
4. (a) (i)	24	Satisfactory. Most candidates correctly described some urban decay problems. However, quite a number of candidates did not refer to the photograph in the question. They mentioned some urban problems, e.g. traffic congestion or housing problems, e.g. high rent, 'sub-divided flats', etc. that were not shown in the photograph.
(ii)		Fair. Most candidates correctly identified the urban renewal strategy at site X. However, many candidates explained how it might solve the housing shortage problem rather than how it might alleviate the urban problems mentioned in (a) (i). Candidates generally did not quote appropriate evidence to support their answers. Some candidates wrongly used 'green belt' to describe the planting at the podium.
(b)		Fair. Although most candidates compared the differences between the two urban renewal projects in terms of their scales, only a small number of them clearly explained the advantages of a comprehensive redevelopment plan. Some candidates listed some land uses and facilities found in area Y, but their explanations were superficial, e.g. more facilities, better environment or higher living standard, etc. Candidates should explain specifically how the presence of these land uses and facilities made the urban renewal plan of area Y more preferable. Some candidates misinterpreted the question. They explained either the greater needs to carry out urban renewal in area Y than site X, or the locational advantages of area Y over site X.

Question Number	Popularity %	Performance in General
4. (c)		Poor. Although most candidates quoted map evidence to support their arguments, many of them only listed some advantages of the location or site of the area. They did not explain the conditions favourable for the 'current' urban renewal. Candidates generally showed inadequate understanding of the 'incentives' for urban renewal. Although many candidates pointed out the improvement in accessibility with the completion of the proposed railway station, they did not further discuss the economic incentive of renewal brought about by it. Few candidates discussed the positive impacts on urban renewal brought about by the relocation of airport, e.g. relaxation of building heights and improvement in living environment, etc.
5. (a) (i)	37	Good. Most candidates described and explained the increasing trend of atmospheric carbon dioxide with appropriate reference to the data provided. However, some candidates did not explain how the decrease in global forest cover might cause an increase in atmospheric carbon dioxide.
(ii)		Fair. Although most candidates drew appropriate annotated diagrams, quite a number of them showed inadequate understanding of radiation activities in the atmosphere. They wrongly labelled 'terrestrial radiation' as 'surface reflection' or 'short wave radiation', and 'solar radiation' as 'long wave radiation'.
(iii)		Satisfactory. Candidates generally stated the increase in atmospheric carbon dioxide could intensify the greenhouse effect and cause global warming. However, some candidates demonstrated inadequate understanding of the greenhouse effect. They gave only brief and superficial explanations of its mechanism. Some candidates gave incorrect explanations of how increasing carbon dioxide intensifies the greenhouse effect, such as absorbing more solar radiation, reflecting more heat in the atmosphere back to earth surface or thickening the atmosphere and thus blocking the heat from dispersing, etc.
(b) (i)		Good. Most candidates correctly described the relationship between the changes in GDP per capita and carbon dioxide emissions per capita. However, some candidates did not explain how an increase in GDP per capita might cause an increase in energy consumption.
(ii)		Poor. Most candidates did not address the situations in countries P, Q and R. Their discussions of international cooperation were mostly superficial, e.g. lack of technology and capital in less developed countries to reduce emissions, disputes over responsibilities or fairness among countries, lack of monitoring, etc. Although a small number of candidates mentioned carbon trade and transfer of energy-saving technology among countries, they lacked adequate understanding of the former. Thus their discussions were not in-depth and did not show clearly how these countries could cooperate. Candidates should also state clearly whether international cooperation was feasible or not in their conclusions.

Question Number	Popularity %	Performance in General
6	23	**Fair.** In the first part of the question, many candidates did not study the question carefully and inappropriately described and explained the characteristics and formation of individual depositional landform features found in the lower course. Besides, candidates generally demonstrated inadequate understanding of the physical conditions favouring river deposition in the lower course. The majority of candidates only stated gradient change as a condition to slow down river velocity. Only a small number of candidates explained correctly the relationship between river energy and deposition. Candidates generally also lacked the concept of drainage basin. They overlooked the influences of the physical conditions of the upper and middle courses on river energy and amount of load. In the second part of the question, although most candidates mentioned some soft and hard river management strategies, many of their answers were about the pros and cons of these strategies in preventing floods. Candidates in general did not discuss the changes brought about by these management strategies to the amount of load, gradient, discharge, velocity and energy of river, etc. Quite a number of candidates mixed up river and coastal management strategies, e.g. conservation of mangrove. Some other candidates suggested some strategies that were not commonly adopted in the lower course of a river, e.g. construction of dams.
7	49	**Fair.** In the first part of the question, candidates generally had only a general understanding of the location of the IT industry in the United States. Although many candidates quoted Silicon Valley as an example, they only gave a brief account of the locational factors of headquarters or R & D centres of the IT industry in general. The answers of some candidates were irrelevant. They described and explained the 'push' and 'pull' factors causing the IT industry in the US to move their manufacturing plants to the less developed countries, e.g. labour cost, land rent and environmental policy, etc. In the second part of the question, candidates generally had only a brief understanding of the multi-point production of the IT industry. They lacked the concepts of 'outsourcing' and 'supply chain', and did not state the importance of highly efficient and reliable global transport and telecommunication systems in maintaining the parts supply chain formed by outsourced firms in various countries. Thus their arguments were mainly general and superficial, such as cutting of transport cost with the use of bulk carriers or using CCTV to monitor production lines in less developed countries, etc. Some candidates listed the advantages of multi-point production in the IT industry such as global market, lower production costs or 24 hours production, etc. However, these advantages were irrelevant to the question.

Question Number	Popularity %	Performance in General
8	29	Fair.

In the first part of the question, most candidates had a general understanding of the three nutrient compartments in a tropical rainforest and correctly described their characteristics, e.g. largest storage in the biomass. However, quite a number of candidates did not correctly explain their characteristics. Besides, some candidates only described the general nutrient cycling of ecosystems.

In the second part of the question, candidates had a general knowledge of the operation of the two farming systems. Thus they were able to describe in general the differences of the two types of farming in terms of scale and farming duration. Some candidates correctly stated the characteristics of human inputs and farm outputs of plantation, e.g. use of chemical fertilisers, export of farm products, etc. Most candidates discussed the changes to biomass brought about by the two farming systems but not the changes to litter and soil. Some candidates did not make a judgement in their conclusion.

General comments and recommendations

1. Candidates should be exposed to more authentic fieldwork experience to enhance their geographical fieldwork knowledge and skills. In addition to following the instructions in the field study manual, they should also actively participate in discussions for a better understanding of the field study, from setting topic to drawing conclusions.

2. Candidates should enhance their knowledge of core geographical concepts such as man-land relationship and spatial concepts. They should also apply appropriate geographical terminologies when answering the questions.

3. Candidates should demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of relevant geographical issues and concepts in answering questions instead of reciting vast amount of information from textbooks which may not be relevant to the questions or making brief and superficial arguments.

4. Candidates should analyse, interpret and extract appropriate data and information and apply geographical knowledge and concepts in their discussions.

5. Candidates should read the questions carefully and discuss according to the conditions stated in the questions, e.g. a *good* warning system, *adopting* this farming management method or *current* urban renewal, etc.

6. Candidates could give reasonable positive and negative arguments in the 'discuss whether' questions but they should clearly state their stance and avoid giving an ambiguous or a contradictory conclusion.

Question Number		Popularity %	Performance in General
1. (a)		34	Good. Most candidates were able to identify the rocks and compare their formation and characteristics. A small number of candidates wrongly identified rock P as sedimentary rock or metamorphic rock, mostly due to the misinterpretation of flow lines on the rock surface as sediment strata or foliated structure. Some candidates confused the formation and characteristics of rhyolite and granite.
(b)	(i)		Fair. Some candidates misinterpreted large diurnal range of temperature as the major climatic characteristic in Hong Kong and the main cause of feature R. Most candidates were able to explain the splitting of rock along cracks but only few were able to explain the formation of the feature with regard to the concept of pressure release.
	(ii)		Good. Most candidates were able to identify rockfall as the type of mass wasting but some mentioned only the evidence of rockfall but not its causes.
(c)	(i)		Satisfactory. Some candidates were able to identify 'salt crystallisation', some other quoted 'exfoliation' in their answers.
	(ii)		Fair. Most candidates were only able to mention the well-jointed structure of the rock. Some candidates failed to state the importance of water, or focused their discussions on rainwater instead of seawater. Some candidates mentioned freeze-thaw action rarely occurred in Hong Kong.
2. (a)	(i)	32	Good. Most candidates were able to compare the climatic characteristics of Hong Kong and Urumqi. Some candidates just copied the data from the question, such as the monthly temperature and rainfall, as their answers. Some candidates mentioned 'annual mean rainfall' which was an incorrect concept. Some candidates failed to state the lower summer temperature in Urumqi as compared to Hong Kong with reference to the information.
	(ii)		Satisfactory. Most candidates were able to explain the differences in temperature and rainfall between Hong Kong and Urumqi with reference to their latitudes and distance from the sea. Some candidates wrongly stated that Hong Kong was affected only by summer monsoon while Urumqi only by winter monsoon. Quite a number of candidates wrongly claimed that the Himalayas blocked the influences of winter monsoon to Hong Kong.
(b)			Fair. Only a small number of candidates were able to state that the higher rainfall on 8 January was from frontal rain. Most candidates were not able to explain the changing weather in Hong Kong with the influences of winter monsoon. Some candidates had limited knowledge of how a cold front affected the weather in Hong Kong.
(c)			Fair. Only a small number of candidates were able to explain the decreasing importance of winter monsoon by the changing pressure gradient between sea and land. They were also not able to point out the increases in temperature and rainfall in Hong Kong being the influences of summer monsoon.

	Question Number	Popularity %	Performance in General
3.	(a)	10	Good. Most candidates were able to identify the transport problem shown in the figure.
	(b) (i)		Fair. Some candidates failed to explain the causes of the transport problem by quoting the information of the question or just copied the information as their answers.
	(ii)		Fair. Most candidates were not able to explain the causes of traffic congestion at site P with reference to Figure 3b. They were also not able to explain the cause of traffic congestion with the concepts of transport, such as transport nodes and connectivity. Some candidates wrongly interpreted the average traffic speed in their answers.
	(c)		Satisfactory. Most candidates were able to explain the environmental impacts brought about by the transport problem. Some candidates were not able to explain the social impacts brought about by the transport problem with geographical terminology.
	(d)		Poor. Some candidates lacked knowledge of the Hong Kong transport information system and thus gave irrelevant answers.
4.	(a)	24	Good. Most candidates were able to account for the favourable physical conditions for agricultural development in Zhaoqing but a small number of them failed to distinguish lowland from flat land.
	(b)		Fair. Most candidates were able to quote data in Table 4c, such as the changing output percentages of major farming products and the increasing number of agricultural technicians to explain the change in gross value of agricultural output in Zhaoqing. Some candidates failed to give explanations with reference to economic restructuring, e.g. how market gardening changed the gross value of agricultural output in Zhaoqing.
	(c) (i)		Fair. Some candidates wrongly identified the farming method shown in Photograph 4d as precision farming, greenhouse farming or drip irrigation instead of hydroponics. Some candidates mentioned intensive farming which was considered too general as an acceptable answer.
	(ii)		Fair. Most candidates failed to point out that hydroponics is more suited for leafy crops. Some candidates limited their discussions to factors of finance, technology and attitudes of farmers.

Question Number	Popularity %	Performance in General
5	52	Satisfactory. In the first part of the question, most candidates explained landslides correctly with the concepts of 'shear stress' and 'shear strength'. However, some of their answers failed to illustrate the relationships between slope stability and climatic conditions as well as weathering profile. Only a small number of candidates were able to explain heavy rainfall as a triggering factor of slope instability. Besides, a small number of candidates gave irrelevant answers such as 'physical weathering' and 'soil erosion' or the incorrect answer of 'lubricating effect of rainwater'. In the second part of the question, most candidates were able to mention briefly how the roots of trees might help hold soil and thus raise the shear strength of the slope. Some candidates were able to state that trees might add weight to the slope and thus increase the shear stress. However, some candidates failed to discuss the limitations of afforestation in greater depth or give concrete examples from Hong Kong. Some candidates mentioned other measures to increase slope stability but without detailed explanations.
6	16	Satisfactory. In the first part of the question, most candidates were able to describe and explain briefly the formation of trade wind belts with 'pressure gradient force' and 'Coriolis force'. However, some of them failed to indicate correctly the wind directions. Only a small number of candidates were able to illustrate how the migration of the overhead sun leads to a change in wind direction after the trade wind crossing the Equator. A small number of candidates confused trade winds with other planetary wind belts such as westerlies and polar easterlies. Some candidates mixed up trade winds and monsoon. In the second part of the question, most candidates were able to explain briefly the relationship between trade winds and rainfall in the equatorial region. They were also able to identify convection rain resulted from the convergence of trade winds as the rainfall characteristics in the equatorial region. Only a small number of candidates were able to state the relationship between the migration of the ITCZ with the overhead sun and the amount and distribution of rainfall. Some candidates were unfamiliar with the location and climatic characteristics of the equatorial region, or wrongly stated that tropical cyclones were commonly formed in the equatorial region. Quite a number of candidates explained the temperature characteristics of the equatorial region with trade winds when there should be no connection between the two.

Question Number	Popularity %	Performance in General
7	8	Poor. In the first part of the question, most candidates failed to state the advantages of Hong Kong as a 'logistics and transport hub' as they were unfamiliar with relevant concepts. They inappropriately described how the convenient transport and historical factors of Hong Kong helped develop trade. Some candidates wrongly stated the benefits to Hong Kong as a logistics and transport hub. In the second part of the question, most candidates lacked knowledge of other cities linked up to Hong Kong by the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge. They were only able to state that the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge helped reduce time and cost in transport. They were also unfamiliar with the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge, including its route, functions, merits and limitations, thus they failed to discuss the advantages it brought about to Hong Kong.
8	25	Fair. In the first part of the question, most candidates were able to state briefly the major sources of water pollution in the Zhujiang Delta Region in the last decade. However, quite a number of candidates failed to give appropriate examples. Some candidates might have overlooked the time period of the 'last decade' and gave outdated examples such as textile and garment industries. Some candidates failed to differentiate industrial, domestic and agriculture sewage. In the second part of the question, only a small number of candidates were able to describe the operation of a sewage treatment plant in detail. Quite a number of candidates were not able to give a detailed account of the quality of sewage after treatment and the sites of sewage treatment plants. Some candidates raised only corruption and high cost as the difficulties encountered in the building of sewage treatment plants, but failed to illustrate the relationship between a sewage treatment plant and the improvement of water quality in the Zhujiang Delta Region.

General comments and recommendations

1. Candidates should study the question, especially the stem of the question carefully. They should also pay particular attention to key geographical terminology.

2. Candidates should interpret the data and information provided in the questions carefully. They should also apply relevant geographical knowledge and concepts to specific situations or cases in the questions.

3. Candidates should organise their ideas systematically and logically. They should also provide relevant examples to demonstrate their understanding of the concepts and spatial location of the cases.

4. In the short essay questions, candidates should put forward concrete arguments and state their stance clearly and logically. They should give clear and definite descriptions, arguments and conclusions in their answers.

5. Candidates should answer the questions appropriately by referring to the directive terms given. They should avoid reproducing the content of textbooks which does not directly answer the questions. They should also practice more on the selection of suitable information from the questions as reference.

6. Candidates should familiarise themselves with the recent development of geographical issues in Hong Kong, Mainland China (specifically the Zhujiang Delta Region) and the world as such issues are changing over time. Teachers are also encouraged to keep abreast of the most current geographical issues and incorporate them into their teaching as appropriate.

7. Candidates generally failed to interpret well the information provide in photographs. Teachers should arrange more such practices in lessons.