

Candidates' Performance

Paper 1 Section A

The average number of questions answered correctly by candidates was 12 out of 20 multiple-choice questions. The overall performance of candidates was satisfactory. There was a slight improvement in the overall performance of candidates as compared with last year. One question in which a distractor was more popular than the key has been selected for further discussion.

In Item 2, the most popular answer was Option C. Candidates who chose this option may have overlooked the two “Ⓜ” at grid reference 513114, representing restricted access. Additionally, candidates may have been confused by the conventional sign for a Petrol Station, which represented the LPG filling station.

Q.2 Which of the following **cannot** be found in grid square 5111?

- | | | |
|-----|------------------------|-------|
| A. | car park | (3%) |
| B. | green minibus terminus | (24%) |
| C. | restricted access | (46%) |
| *D. | LPG filling station | (26%) |

Paper 1 Section B

Question Number	Popularity %	Performance in General
<p>1. (a)</p> <p>(b)</p> <p>(c) (i)</p> <p>(ii)</p> <p>(d)</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>Poor. Some gave the merit and demerit but did not explain their answers.</p> <p>Poor. Most candidates mentioned fairness as the reason but failed to explain how the fairness was kept by stratified sampling. They also failed to explain the sampling method regarding the physical settings of the field site.</p> <p>Satisfactory.</p> <p>Poor. While most candidates provided an explanation for drawing the conclusion 'the higher the light intensity, the higher the coverage of undergrowth', few were able to demonstrate how the data was used to support the conclusion. Most candidates failed to interpret the scatter diagram in terms of the orientation of the best-fit line, the distribution of data points and the distance between data points and the best-fit line.</p> <p>Poor. Only basic and brief recommendations for improvement were given. Few candidates were able to describe the drawbacks of the current practices and give appropriate suggestions in response to the context of the current fieldwork and the setting of the field site for improvement.</p>
<p>2. (a) (i)</p> <p>(ii)</p> <p>(b) (i)</p> <p>(ii)</p> <p>(c)</p>	<p>52</p>	<p>Satisfactory. Some candidates wrongly named the type of plate boundary as landform feature A.</p> <p>Fair. Most candidates annotated their drawings related to vulcanicity appropriately. Some candidates confused "fold mountain" and "volcanic island arc" as the tectonic features along the plate boundary. A number of candidates only wrote paragraphs about the formation next to the drawings without annotation.</p> <p>Very good. The majority explained the adverse socio-economic impact brought about by volcanic ash. Many candidates were able to respond with reference to the data and did not include lava as one of the ejecta.</p> <p>Satisfactory. Many candidates explained the low death toll with evidence from the data, including the "time factor" and "the immediate actions taken by the government".</p> <p>Fair. Some candidates gave logical discussion and reasoning regarding the appropriateness of the suggestion, especially on the economic opportunities, cost-effectiveness and preparedness of people. Some candidates explained the potential risk brought about by volcano X, for example, high eruption frequency and ejection of fatal materials. However, they did not justify the appropriateness of the proposed banning act and land use zoning measure. A number of candidates wrongly stated that the large amount of volcanic ash ejected would trigger tsunami.</p>

Question Number	Popularity %	Performance in General
5. (a)	75	Poor. Few candidates differentiated between the general and specific descriptions of the distribution patterns and thus failed to provide corresponding answers.
(b) (i)		Very good. Most candidates gave an accurate explanation of the climatic conditions leading to the problem of food shortage.
(ii)		Very good. Most candidates gave an accurate explanation of the socio-economic conditions leading to the problem of food shortage.
(c)		Poor. Many candidates did not recognize the measure referenced in Figure 5c as a one-off measure; much irrelevant explanation of aid provided to improve farming practices/ productivity in the long run.
(d)		Poor. Most candidates provided a brief explanation of the pros and/or limitations of stone lines; the majority of candidates discussed the climatic constraints but rarely considered other settings such as the land carrying capacity and availability of local resources; much irrelevant explanation of salinisation as a negative impact of stone line was given.

Paper 1 Section C

Question Number	Popularity %	Performance in General
6	21	Satisfactory. In the first part of the question, most candidates demonstrated a basic to intermediate understanding of the physical conditions favouring deposition at the lower course of a river. Many candidates were able to describe and explain multiple factors leading to deposition at the lower course of a river. Some candidates were able to relate the conditions with the amount of river energy to explain the deposition. They demonstrated a good understanding of the interplay between the river's energy and the physical conditions favouring deposition. However, quite a number of candidates included depositional features and explained their formations, all of which was irrelevant to the question. Another mistake commonly found was to include the work of waves and confuse the coastal and fluvial processes in the explanation. Such candidates demonstrated a lack of understanding of the differences between the two processes. In the second part of the question, most candidates were able to describe the most common channelisation methods, including widening, straightening and deepening. They failed to address the question words 'the recent practices', and thus, their discussion was commonly brief and general. Many candidates only focused on the negative impacts of channelisation, especially on the environmental aspects, without providing adequate content to explain how the recent practices enhanced sustainability. However, some candidates described and explained the latest developments of channelisation, such as fish ladders and green channelisation. Such candidates demonstrated a good understanding of the need to adopt sustainable channelisation practices to manage the river environment in Hong Kong. Relevant examples were also provided to support their answers.

Question Number	Popularity %	Performance in General
7	56	<p>Fair.</p> <p>In the first part of the question, most candidates demonstrated a basic to intermediate understanding of different commercial agricultural activities in tropical rainforests. They described the commercial agricultural activities in tropical rainforests, including plantation and cattle ranching. Most candidates were able to explain the changes in the vegetation characteristics of tropical rainforests brought about by those activities, including density, amount, species diversity and structure. However, quite a number of candidates failed to distinguish between commercial agricultural activities and other human activities causing deforestation. This resulted in answers which contained irrelevant content.</p> <p>In the second part of the question, most candidates were unable to give descriptions of agroforestry or explain the pros and limitations of practising agroforestry. They demonstrated a lack of understanding of the concept of agroforestry. Quite a number of candidates mistakenly explained another practice, afforestation, resulting in much irrelevant content.</p>
8	21	<p>Fair.</p> <p>In the first part of the question, candidates' performance was good. Most candidates described and explained the adverse impacts of climate change on the hydrosphere, including sea level rise, changes in water supply, alterations in rainfall patterns, melting of sea and land ice, and other relevant impacts. They were able to provide examples to support their answers and demonstrated a good understanding of the topic. However, some candidates included other impacts, such as the impacts on biodiversity, soil and climate, which resulted in irrelevant content in their answers.</p> <p>In the second part of the question, candidates' performance was poor. Most candidates failed to respond to the question words 'advanced technology'. They gave brief and general explanations of the limitations of the use of advanced technology to alleviate the adverse impact. In addition, some candidates suggested relevant measures, such as artificial rain, desalination, and provided good explanations as to how to alleviate the adverse impact.</p>

General comments and recommendations

1. Candidates generally demonstrated a basic understanding of each module. Sub-questions about basic geographical concepts and issues of each module were mostly well answered.
2. Candidates should interpret the information and data provided carefully and respond to the questions carefully.
3. Candidates should not merely copy the data and information from the figures provided and not provide further elaboration and explanation.
4. Candidates should read the questions more carefully for better understanding of the question words Directive words such as "how" and "why" were also confused.
5. Candidates should explain the arguments with the use of the data provided for the open-ended questions. They should apply their knowledge appropriately to the specific situations stated in the questions.

Paper 2 Section D

Question Number	Popularity %	Performance in General
1. (a) (i)	39	<p>Good.</p> <p>Most candidates described orientation of the Tai Lam Fault correctly. But a small number of candidates only mentioned one point of the compass, for example north-east as the fault orientation, which was an incomplete answer.</p>
(ii)		<p>Fair.</p> <p>Many candidates wrongly identified the landscape as rift valley and gave irrelevant answers about its formation. Some confused fault with joint and weathering with erosion in their answers, and then deviated their answer to explain how the faults resulted in the formation of rills and gullies. In general, candidates demonstrated an understanding that faults were less resistant to weathering and erosion, but many of them only pointed out that the processes led to the formation of lowland instead of the river valley shown in the figure. Some wrongly interpreted the reservoir as having been formed directly by weathering and erosion along the fault. Very few candidates correctly related the right-angled fault pattern to the rectangular drainage pattern.</p>
(b) (i)		<p>Good.</p> <p>A small number of candidates simply named and described the characteristics or the formation of the rock, but they did not explain the formation of the landform feature. Although most candidates got marks by showing good knowledge of the chemical weathering of granite, very few of them precisely related it to the formation of badland / gully. Some misconceptions like 'physical weathering occurred easily in granite in Hong Kong' and 'rainwater eroded granite to form badlands' were commonly found in the answers.</p>
(ii)		<p>Good.</p> <p>Many candidates identified the landform feature correctly and understood that rainwater erosion resulted in its formation. A small number of candidates simply copied some rainfall data from the question information, or briefly described the rainfall characteristics. This resulted in inadequate answers. Some candidates provided wrong answers related to the formation of the landform feature, for example 'rainwater caused slumping', 'it was formed by rain and wind erosion' etc., showing that such candidates confused some key concepts of weathering, erosion and mass-wasting.</p>
(c)		<p>Satisfactory.</p> <p>Afforestation and hiking were two human activities commonly mentioned by candidates. The presence of the reservoir and designation of the country park were mentioned by some candidates. However, the impact brought about by different human activities on the physical landscape was not well explained. For example, some mentioned that hiking activities could lead to littering, or deforestation. Some mentioned that the reservoir would increase and hence intensify weathering and erosion, but they did not demonstrate an understanding of the impact of damming of the valley on the drainage system. A small number of candidates listed the negative impacts of afforestation, which was irrelevant. Very few candidates understood the function of country parks, which could restrict development and help conserve the physical landscape of a designated area.</p>

Question Number	Popularity %	Performance in General
2. (a) (i)	27	<p>Excellent. Candidates in general identified the 'winter' season by interpreting the temperature distribution pattern correctly.</p>
		<p>Good. Most candidates described and explained the latitudinal change of temperature distribution pattern in terms of the latitudinal change and the different heating properties of continents and oceans. However, their answers could have been more specific and could have included 'on the same latitude' when mentioning the higher / lower temperature on sea / land. Some candidates had misconceptions, e.g. 'the higher the latitude, the thicker atmosphere' and 'the higher latitudes, the longer distance from the sun'. Also, a small number of candidates wrongly compared the temperature pattern between the northern and southern hemispheres.</p>
(b) (i)		<p>Excellent. Most candidates were able to interpret the weather symbols. Only a small number of candidates erroneously provided the unit of wind speed as 'km/hour'.</p>
(ii)		<p>Good. Most candidates correctly explained the wind speed by the difference in pressure gradient. The influence of pressure difference and Coriolis force on wind direction were appropriately explained. However, a small number of candidates mistook the cold front (a weather system) for the pressure system shown in the figure. Some wrongly stated 'relief' as a factor in their explanation.</p>
(c)		<p>Good. Most candidates explained the lower temperature of city B by referring to the position of an advancing cold front or cold air mass. They performed well in explaining the occurrence of rain in Hong Kong by linking the processes of 'frontal rain formation' with the advancing cold front. However, a small number of candidates wrongly explained the temperature and precipitation differences by using the factors of 'latitude' or 'distance from sea'. Their answers were not appropriate due to the proximity of the two cities. Such candidates failed to realise that the focus was on weather instead of climate in this part of the question.</p>

Question Number	Popularity %	Performance in General
3. (a) (i)	9	<p>Excellent.</p> <p>Candidates in general compared the growth of vehicles and road length correctly. However, a small number of candidates only listed the data of different types of vehicles in different years. Very few candidates understood that private cars had the largest increase.</p>
(ii)		<p>Good.</p> <p>Most candidates understood public buses had a larger passenger-carrying capacity and lower occupancy of road space than those of private cars. However, only some candidates were able to correctly work out the ratio between the two types of vehicles in terms of passenger-carrying capacity and road space occupied. Very few candidates were able to infer that public buses could alleviate traffic congestion.</p>
(b)		<p>Good.</p> <p>Most candidates made good use of the data provided by the question, including the population and land use of district A, and the traffic flow of road X. However, they did not elaborate clearly how the data showed the increasing demand for public / goods transport. Some candidates took note of the impact of roundabouts and the large number of bus routes, but very few took the large number of road junctions and queuing of buses at bus stops into account to explain the traffic problem in the district. Instead, they commonly mentioned the 'presence of narrow roads' as a cause, which was not shown in the question data.</p>
(c)		<p>Satisfactory.</p> <p>Candidates did not have a clear concept of road traffic management measures, in order to give reasonable and relevant answers. Some candidates wrongly suggested the widening of existing roads or building of new roads. Others proposed to ban the goods vehicles from using the road or unloading cargo, which was not feasible for the commercial / industrial district.</p>
(d)		<p>Fair.</p> <p>Because very few candidates understood the meaning of bus-rapid transit (BRT), most of the answers were either vague or irrelevant. Some candidates regarded the system as implementing a kind of special bus service or bus-only lane. Candidates using the Chinese version of the Paper commonly mistook it as a general form of public transport system. Some candidates stated the merits and demerits of BRT instead of discussing the feasibility of using BRT in district A. Only a small number of candidates gave relevant answers in the context of the district.</p>

Question Number	Popularity %	Performance in General
4. (a)	25	<p>Good.</p> <p>Most candidates identified the reduction of cultivated land and the spatial differences in Zhujiang Delta Region. However, some candidates only described the increase in built-up areas rather than using the data to explain the reduction of cultivated land. They provided some reasons for the loss of cultivated land in general, but some wrongly quoted the data from Figure 4b to explain the higher rate of loss at Foshan. This was not relevant to this part of the question.</p>
(b)		<p>Good.</p> <p>Almost all candidates identified the changes in the output of major farm products. Many candidates correctly explained the changes by referring to the higher demand / profit of fruit and vegetables. However, few candidates made good use of the information provided in explaining the changes. For example, they did not elaborate well on the impact of a large increase of GDP per capita and the growth of total highway length. Some candidates quoted data irrelevant to the question, like the changes in GDP shared by different industries and the agricultural policy, or gave far-fetched reasons like import of food from other countries.</p>
(c) (i)		<p>Excellent.</p> <p>Most candidates identified the major challenges faced by agriculture in Foshan.</p>
(ii)		<p>Good.</p> <p>Many candidates were able to list the advantages of greenhouse, and the merits of the flower production centre as the means to deal with the loss of cultivated land and farm labour, although some missed the key terms such as intensive farming, automation, diversified market etc. in their answers. Some candidates pointed out elements not shown by the question data, for example hydroponics and mechanisation. Others cited such information as the agricultural policy in Foshan, which was not relevant to this part of the question.</p>
(d)		<p>Satisfactory.</p> <p>A small number of candidates repeated their answers in (c)(ii), that is, the advantages of greenhouse farming, but could not offer other relevant information, such as the favourable agricultural policies to support their argument on application of the technology. Some candidates gave relevant statements in their discussion with regard to the conditions in Foshan, but very few candidates paid heed to the specific requirements of the different farm products.</p>

Paper 2 Section E

Question Number	Popularity %	Performance in General
5	55	<p>Satisfactory.</p> <p>In the first part of the question, most candidates were able to give a general account of how rainfall caused landslides in Hong Kong. They described some physical processes involved, including chemical weathering, an increase in pore water pressure, the weakening of soil cohesion, an increase in weight of slope materials etc. They demonstrated an understanding of the relationship between stress and strength. However, they were unable to elaborate their answer systematically to show how these processes led to the occurrence of landslides. Some candidates provided relevant examples to illustrate how rainfall caused landslides in Hong Kong. Nevertheless, some candidates provided erroneous statements like 'rainwater acts as lubricant', 'rainwater washed away regolith and exposed rock to physical weathering and decreased the shear strength' etc. Also, a small number of candidates confused landslides with soil erosion. Although both of them are caused by heavy rainfall, they are two different geomorphic processes which produce different features.</p> <p>In the second part of the question, most candidates displayed good knowledge of the measures to mitigate the risk of landslides. Their most common approach was to explain the merits and limitations of the measures. However, their discussion was weak in general. The question key words 'landslides caused by rainfall' were overlooked. As a result, very few candidates focused their discussion on the effectiveness of the engineering measures to reduce the infiltration of rainwater into slopes, for example shotcretes, weep holes, and drainage channels. Other measures such as soil nails and retaining wall could have been taken as supporting engineering measures for discussion. Moreover, a number of students wrote the names of some engineering measures wrongly, for example iron nail, retaining dam and catchwater. Some candidates wrongly named strategies such as afforestation and public education, which could not prevent the occurrence of landslides. Finally, some candidates named other measures, for example, slope maintenance, banning development on slopes etc., but they did not understand that the effectiveness of related engineering measures depended on slope environment, such as natural slopes and artificial slopes, and the approach of implementation could be varied.</p>

Question Number	Popularity %	Performance in General
6	21	<p data-bbox="531 262 667 291">Satisfactory.</p> <p data-bbox="531 324 1375 701">In the first part of the question, although some candidates defined drought correctly at the outset, they commonly mistook 'drought' for 'water shortage'. Most answers explained drought by detailing the physical causes of low rainfall in the region, instead of relating it to the variability of climatic conditions between seasons and years. Also, most candidates did not have a clear picture of the geographical extent of North China. Their answers were either restricted to a smaller area such as the North-west, or wrongly took the Qing Zang Gaoyuan as part of North China when they described the Himalayas as a relief barrier to the summer monsoons. Some candidates misunderstood the relationship between the atmospheric processes of evaporation and precipitation, for example by stating that a cause of drought in North China was the low evaporation rate in winter.</p> <p data-bbox="531 734 1375 1111">In the second part of the question, many candidates only focused on the possible problems of the South-to-North water diversion project, such as high cost, pollution, water leakage, reducing the supply of water in Southern China etc. They only mentioned briefly the benefits of the project to agricultural and urban-industrial activities in North China. Very few candidates understood that the stable source of water supply brought by the project could alleviate the drought in North China caused by physical factors. Only a small number of candidates paid heed to the supply-demand issue, which is the need to control the water demand in North China whilst increasing the water supply in the discussion. Ways of water conservation to reduce demand was relevant to the discussion, but measures like 'cloud seeding' or 'afforestation' were not feasible to solve the drought problem in the long run.</p>
7	3	<p data-bbox="531 1153 592 1182">Poor.</p> <p data-bbox="531 1216 1375 1592">In the first part of the question, despite the straightforward description required, most candidates gave irrelevant answers due to their seemingly limited knowledge of the topic. Candidates in general mistook transit-oriented development as being a central public transport station or railway station. Thus, their descriptions of the characteristics were either vague or wrong. Only a very small number of candidates was able to list some characteristics of transit-oriented development. However, with the exception of Lohas Park, other Hong Kong examples named, like Shatin, Tung Chung etc. were inappropriate. This is because the concept of transit-oriented development includes not only high-density development around a mass-transit station, but is also a planning strategy to provide facilities that promote green transport and sustainable city development.</p> <p data-bbox="531 1626 1375 1944">In the second part of the question, candidates' performance was undermined by their poor understanding of transit-oriented development. Most of the answers vaguely discussed the impact of transport or railway development on urban expansion. A number of candidates cited examples of New Towns in Hong Kong to show how such development might affect urban expansion. However, they failed to explain the influence of other factors such as land rent and housing policy on urban expansion, and did not elaborate on both the positive (intensify) and negative (slow down) effect of transit-oriented development in their discussion. Candidates' poor performance showed that they did not learn the new concepts thoroughly.</p>

Question Number	Popularity %	Performance in General
8	20	<p>Satisfactory.</p> <p>In the first part of the question, most candidates provided a lengthy description of the change from rural-agricultural dominant to urban-industrial dominant in Zhujiang Delta Region (ZDR) since the 1980s. They also stated various factors leading to the change, for example 'Open Door Policy', setting up of 'Special Economic Zones', and some socio-economic development of the region that favoured urban-industrial growth but suppressing agriculture. However, very few candidates focused on 'changes of land use pattern'. Hence, they failed to relate those factors which sped up commercial-industrial development to the expansion of towns and cities, the emergence of industrial suburbs, city clusters and villages-in-city, the loss of agricultural land and rural areas. There are spatial and temporal differences in the changes regarding the long time span from the 1980s to the present and the large geographical extent of ZDR. Yet, very few candidates addressed the differences.</p> <p>In the second part of the question, most candidates wrongly provided answers from the topic 'environmental problems in Zhujiang Delta Region', to give a lengthy account of the negative impacts of urban-industrial development on air, water and land etc. Some wrongly cited the green-house effect as an environmental issue of the region. However, most candidates overlooked the words 'since 2000' in the question. Only a small number of candidates who described the 'Emptying Cage for the Birds Policy' or industrial upgrading as a form of recent industrial changes in first part of the question were aware of the positive impacts on the environment. Most candidates failed to understand that although some environmental problems might persist, the recent industrial changes together with measures like better environmental and urban planning, tightening of pollution control and advances in green technology had contributed to environmental improvement in the Zhujiang Delta Region. Candidates' misconceptions showed that they could not keep themselves updated with the development of ZDR and did not pay attention to the release of relevant data.</p>

General comments and recommendations

1. Candidates should go back to basics to spell key geographical terms correctly, they should use them properly to show their understanding of the relevant topics.
2. Candidates should strengthen their understanding of key geographical concepts, particularly in learning the relationship between processes and the resulting features.
3. Apart from using textbooks, candidates should update their knowledge and information from different resources regarding the properties of the topics.
4. Candidates should pay heed to new content and learning areas in response to the recent amendments in the curriculum.
5. Candidates should pay attention to key words of questions, and use the relevant data in answering different parts of data-based questions.
6. Candidates should read into the questions carefully, and organise their answers logically rather than writing accounts or reciting knowledge without due consideration to its relevance to the question.