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Examiners' Report January 2010

GCE Geography 6GE02

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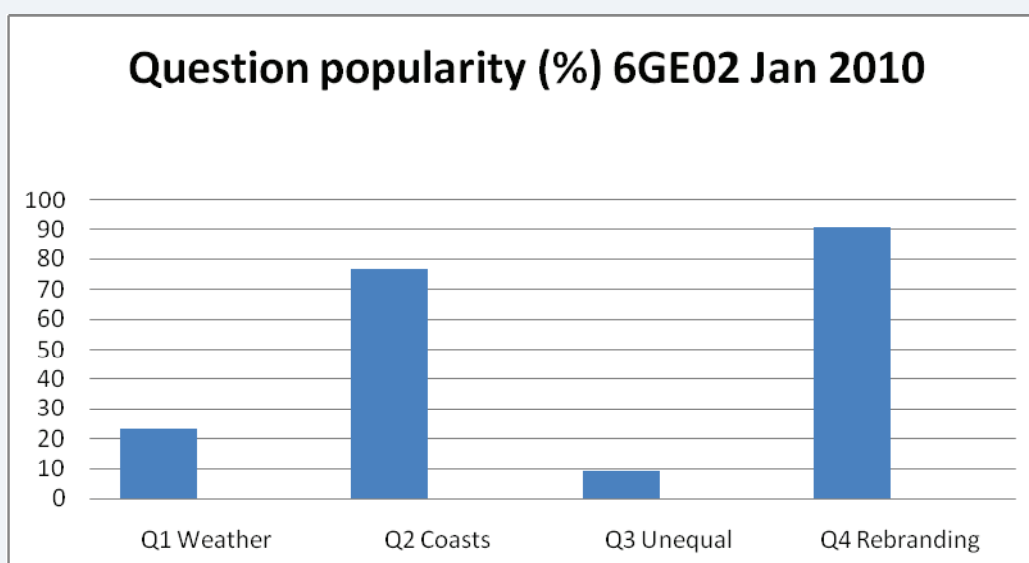
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General Comments On Performance

Once again, paper proved generally accessible to candidates across the ability range. The additional 15 minutes had marked influence in both in terms of the quality of responses (more thinking time) and seemed (based partly on anecdotal evidence and statistics from ePEN), to reduce the number of non-completed scripts. As in both 2009 series Question 2 ('Coasts') and Question 4 ('Rebranding') were by far the most popular and Question 3 ('Unequal Spaces') the least. The popularity of this series is shown on the graph below:



The total entry for this winter series 6GE02 was approximately 6,000 candidates. Generally performance was good (as noted already improved from 2009 series) with very few examples of candidates committing rubric offences, eg two questions from either Q1+Q2, or using the wrong resource to answer a question.

It is pleasing to note that one notable area of improvement is the quality of responses associated with the 15 mark fieldwork and research questions. Centres seem to be gaining a better understanding on the demands of this part of the exam. It was evident that many centres are using past papers, mark schemes and other assessment-focused resources to help prepare candidates. Many centres have also embraced the notion of more contemporary approaches to fieldwork and are less focused on quantitative measurements which can be difficult to implement for inequality and rebranding. They have also considered more carefully the role of 'research', with some candidates explaining how it is a necessary pre-cursor (to 'profile' and area) before embarking on the actual fieldwork itself.

As part of examination preparation, it is very important that candidates appreciate the different demands of the parts of the questions:

The part (a) questions are essentially about responding to the resources which have been provided. Rehearsing how to respond to photographs, data and maps is really important prior to taking the exam (eg by using these resources as starters at the beginning of lessons), allowing candidates to deal with patterns, trends and anomalies. It is also very important that candidates establish whether the task is one of description or explanation. It is certainly not a place to deliver detailed or wide-ranging case studies.

The fieldwork and research questions are an opportunity for candidates to showcase the investigative work they have carried out or discussed. It is pleasing to see the range of techniques attempted and the sources consulted in this work. Many candidates have an absolute armoury of fieldwork options and research resources at their disposal. The very best responses were able to describe accurately the group or individual fieldwork they had done in real locations. Weaker candidates became lost in case study information not focussing on the sources from which this data had come. Lists of fieldwork techniques can only gain a limited amount of marks and it is the use of these techniques in an investigation that the questions often require. Remember that questions may not always focus on the planning and execution of fieldwork and research, but could also be focused on:

- A description of the methods used to present and analyse the data and;
- A description of the results, conclusions and how the work was evaluated.

The final group of exam questions are those in which candidates are encouraged to use a range of **examples or case study** information to support their responses. By now they and their teachers should be aware that such questions may be part (b) or part (c) items. Choosing the most appropriate case study or examples is very important and can in itself lead to success or failure. There are often options in terms of MDC or LDC, rural or urban, economic and environmental. These questions often ask for examples which can mean types or named places. Often key words occur in these questions like (in this case) strategies, spectrum, marginalised, and catalyst. Such technical terms are important and almost always will come directly from the specification.

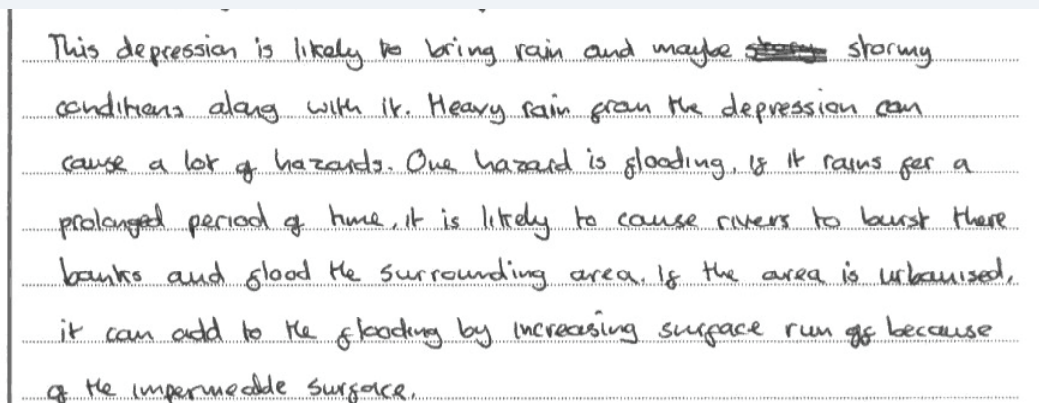
There are some specific strategies (some of which were mentioned in 2009 reports) that can be shared with candidates to help improve efficiency:

- In many instances, the simple difference between **describe and explain** still needs reinforcing. Many candidates spent too much time giving processes or causes, not linked to the question. Candidates should be reminded that appropriate interpretation of the command words is essential to access L3 or L4 marks.
- Again it was common for some candidates just to **provide a narrative** of all the fieldwork/research they had done, rather than appreciating the need to link their answer more fully to the question set, especially in questions 1+2, the physical options. Again, tighter focus would have saved time more effectively and produced a more focused response. It is useful to think about the fieldwork and research process following a particular series of steps:
 1. Initial research of location (linked to a real place) to create a 'profile' or geographical picture of a place. This may be using geodemographic websites such as Neighbourhood statistics; also local books, newspapers (named) and magazines.
 2. Selection of sites, based on knowledge obtained by research, eg comparison of two output areas. Description of size of area, or coastal reach etc. Also the use of maps, eg 1:25,000 and 1:10,000 to help select sites.
 3. Design of the fieldwork, including reference to sampling, number of surveys etc and idea of looking at historical data to be able to investigate change. Some candidates refer to the importance of the pilot survey, especially for questionnaires and to 'pre-calibrate' environmental quality surveys. Also may include the development of hypotheses/predictions.
 4. Carry out the fieldwork.
 5. Carry out any additional research, especially if the fieldwork generates further linked areas of enquiry.
- Linked to the above comments, some candidate ended-up writing **very similar answers** for both of their 15 mark fieldwork and response questions. Whilst there is clearly some overlap in terms of approaches and methodology, a simple repeat of techniques is going to lack focus on the question. In many cases students gave a generic list of 'questionnaires', 'environmental quality surveys', 'land-use maps' etc; often these were not appropriate to the fieldwork required in the question. The same comments are also true for the research, eg census website.
- **Bullets and numbered** lists can be used as part of an answer (especially useful if short of time), but candidates should avoid only using a list only. Bear in mind that bullets work well for describe type answers but can be less good for the explain responses.
- A small minority of candidates '**maxed-out**' on one particular question, recognising the question and then went into overdrive. This can lead to far too much time being spent on one question and then running out of time. Time management is still very important in this exam, despite the additional 15 minutes.
- Linked to the above comment, there is no need to expect candidates to fill all the **white space** available. There were some exemplary full-mark responses where candidates had only used 60-80% of the available page space. Their responses had been thoughtful, accurate and concise. Writing using a crisp style paid significant dividends to candidates as they were able to manage their time effectively and keep focused on the task set.
- The **use of language**, particularly the precision which terminology is used and the structure of individual responses, remains a barrier to success for many students. If figures contain data, students need to be coached to use this data directly in their answer, particularly when commenting on possible limitations (Q3+ Q4). Some candidates would do well if they did not do too much 'rambling' at the beginning of questions, merely repeating the question and giving too much irrelevant information before embarking on the answer to the question. Best advice is still to get straight to the point! Practice of different styles of questions under timed conditions is important as part of exam preparation.

Comments On Individual Questions

1(a) This was sometimes disappointing as this style of question should have been one to have practised beforehand. The good answers linked the features of the depression to the likely hazards involved, with some recognition of the spatial differences. Most candidates were able to identify the depression and its fronts and tightly drawn isobars and go on to suggest events such as heavy rain, flooding and gales. Few, however, went on to develop how these might become hazardous, by damaging property, disrupting transport or even costing lives.

More specific issues like the possibility of snow (in March), storm surges along coasts and references to places on the map were seen less often. More marks could have been obtained by referring to particular locations, eg SW England and W coast of Ireland etc. Weaker responses tended to lack focus and became side-tracked into meteorological processes or descriptions of previous UK flood events. Remember that for this style of question, the important idea is the hazard, rather than any great theoretical knowledge of weather systems. Some centres may be over-teaching the meteorological theory.



This depression is likely to bring rain and maybe ~~storm~~ stormy conditions along with it. Heavy rain from the depression can cause a lot of hazards. One hazard is flooding, if it rains for a prolonged period of time, it is likely to cause rivers to burst their banks and flood the surrounding area. If the area is urbanised, it can add to the flooding by increasing surface run off because of the impermeable surface.

Example 1 – understands the notion of hazards linked to resource.



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Examiner Comments

This response shows some focus on hazards linked to resource, but could be improved with locational details, eg places/regions affected etc.

1(b) Investigations into flood events were the norm here and some of the best responses were accounts of flood impact investigations in various locations across the UK. Weaker responses tended to drift off into descriptions of case studies like Boscastle while the very best provided expert summaries of actual fieldwork and research in and around Shrewsbury. Some also described weather diaries which only had limited linkage to the question set. As with all of the fieldwork and research questions, responses tend to be much stronger, and more detailed, when an actual fieldwork location is described.

On this question candidates tended to be self penalising if they chose hurricanes rather than floods since they couldn't accurately describe the fieldwork to support a study of the impacts.

The mark schemes for these style of questions do vary in detail but in general they do have a pattern which teachers and candidates should take on board:

Levels (marks)	What the examiner sees	What candidates do
Level one(0-4)	Responses here are very brief, showing little evidence of appropriate investigation	Miss the point of question, writing about a case study not investigation
Level two(5-8)	A generally descriptive style linking some fieldwork or research to the topic involved	Describe/list some related fieldwork techniques or refer to sources like books, internet or maps
Level three((9-12)	A range of broad or detailed fieldwork and/or research that does focus clearly on the topic. Max 10 if only fieldwork or research done	Choose only those fieldwork and research sources relevant to the topic involved. Explain how they are used, what they show and how they link to the question
Level four(13-15)	As above but clear response to any particular emphasis in the question and demonstrates actual fieldwork and research carried out	As above but focus on eg causes or impacts. Research information is specific and detailed. Fieldwork is accurate and seen as part of a wider investigation

Example 2 – Fieldwork not relevant to the question set.

(b) Describe the **fieldwork** and **research** you would undertake in order to investigate the **impacts** of a named extreme weather event.

(15)

~~For a fieldwork~~, I would do a weather diary. For my weather diary I would take the temperature, using a thermometer. Other things I would measure are, the ~~wind speed~~ ^{air pressure} where I would use a barometer, the wind speed which I would measure with an anemometer. To measure amount of rain, I would use a rain gauge. Apart from these, I would also test the cloud type by using a cloud type chart and the cloud coverage. I would present the cloud coverage on an octachart. I would



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Examiner Comments

Fieldwork and research must be focused on the question, ie impacts of an event. This candidates has described a weather diary, which shows very little linkage to impacts.



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Examiner Tip

Candidates should avoid the generalised 'we did this' narrative and instead link their own fieldwork experience to the question. Selection is important here.

1(c) This final part of Q1 was about drought reduction and many chose to begin their answers with a definition and the example of Australia. A range of strategies such as improved water harvesting, storage and distribution or water conservation were explained well by most candidates. Named examples from Australia were common while others shifted emphasis to LDC strategies in east Africa. Weaker responses wasted too much time on describing droughts in general, ie impacts rather than their reduction. Note – examiners interpreted the 'examples' in the question to either mean examples of strategies or places.

Example 3 A good range of detail focused on drought reduction.

crystals to the atmosphere. But ^{it} was unsuccessful in China when they made it snow. Water restriction can be imposed like 120 litres per person in the Australian drought (Big dry). ~~Also~~ Also water was used only for consumption by people and livestock so ~~farming~~ crops got less water. The smart water group in Australia helps save 10 gigalitres of water a year and by forcing a river into 2 sections where marsh land is grown and the ~~land~~ habitats are created. The water quality is improved and ~~4%~~ ^{4%} increase in water security. Drought resistant crops are being used, improved by CSIRO in Australia which don't die in lack of water like 'Drysdale' wheat. Also there would be a 5% yield increase. Crop management strategies are enforced.



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Examiner Comments

A very comprehensive range of detail from different places (China, Australia); well focused on question.

2(a) This seemed a very accessible question, again one which candidates might have anticipated and hopefully practised in terms of photo-interpretation. Most made good use of the photo of Alicante, describing its appeal and development as a tourist destination. The photo of Great Yarmouth drew less effective responses. Candidates tended to concentrate on one particular idea such as differences in transport (rail/air travel), weather (variable/sunny), target visitors (older/18-30s) and length of stay (day/weekly), but few developed these in either range or detail.

Stronger responses focussed on explanation whilst weaker ones became too wrapped up in the minutiae of the photographs. This was an example of a question where candidates did much better when they were able to demonstrate their knowledge of the growth of different coastal resorts. Note - as the question required candidates to discuss the two resorts shown, there was very little reward for students who chose to write about two different places, eg Barcelona and Blackpool.

Example 4 – a successful blend of description and geographical knowledge.

sea. The reason these areas developed is because as with the growth of the Tourism market came the investment into facilities to house increasing numbers of tourists built upon the foundations of a beautiful landscape and scenery as well as the sub-tropical climate. The newly rich in these areas continued to invest to attract more visitors and the tourism market here is going from strength to strength.



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Examiner Comments

Mixing geographical knowledge into the response provided a coherent response, linked to question.

Example 5 – Using photographic evidence and detail. Example 7 Strong details and theory, but lacking some focus on the question.

Great Yarmouth has be developed differently than Alicante as it has been developed around the local Heritage of the town. In the foreground of the picture leading to the background there are ~~ex~~ traditional lampposts that compliment the Victorian feel. The pier ~~will have~~ has a Victorian look also to keep with the theme of the town. In the left of the photo there are traditional buildings that will have been refurbished that are



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Examiner Tip

Candidates should avoid the generalised 'we did this' narrative and instead link their own fieldwork experience to the question. Selection is important here.

2(b) The impacts of coastal development provide a broad topic that candidates explored in a variety of ways. The basic idea is to compare the situation before and after development, but only a minority appreciated the need to look at change. Most responses were about the economic and environmental effects. There were some excellent investigations carried out at places like Minehead, Bournemouth, Jurassic Coast, Newquay and Blackpool – reference to actual places and the fieldwork carried out there tended to mean they avoided slipping into 'case study mode'. Again, candidates needed to refer to both fieldwork and research data to access the top of L3 and beyond.

Example 6 – Additional research linked to question.

The secondary research included using census, to see if the areas population and other such demographics have changed due to the development. GIS such as Google Earth were used to see if coastal development has reduced dereliction of the area, working as a percentage. Other research included looking at photographs, to see if ~~any~~ the surrounding area had changed, and if environmentally the development had increased pollution (visual), and whether overall land quality had reduced. Also, maps could be seen to see if the coastline had retreated.

2(c) Exemplification here was very varied with case studies drawn from all parts of the UK. Some used a number of sites such as along the Holderness coast or within Start Bay, whilst others focussed on one resort. In both cases the best answers explained why particular types of defence were chosen for each place. The most common responses involved dealing factors like LSD and geology, land value or population density. Some excellent geography here with references to SMPs and cost-benefit-analysis.

Example 7 Strong details and theory, but lacking some focus on the question.

(c) Using examples, explain why managing coastal environments increasingly relies on a **spectrum** of approaches from 'do-nothing' to hard engineering.

(10)

Places along the Holderness coast need managing due to rapid erosion and many places along this coastline have been protected. Hornsea has wooden groynes to protect its coastline. This caused problems for Mableton downstream, as the wooden groynes trapped sediment and this caused Mableton to be starved of sediment. This is called terminal groyne syndrome. The act of protecting one place may have adverse effects on another place. The UK is divided into eleven sediment cells and many of these can be divided into sub cells. Sediment movement in these cells is mainly self contained and sediment is not always easily replaced. Engineers are now beginning to consider whole cells or sub cells for protection, rather than individual places, which can cause problems such as those at Hornsea and Mableton. This is called an Integrated Management Plan (IMP) and it involves studying whole stretches of coastline, such as the Holderness coast, rather than individual places. The Holderness IMP



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Examiner Comments

A very comprehensive response with lots of location detail, but it needs to have more focus on why different approaches might be used in different areas, eg cost - benefit, land value etc.

3(a) The resource for this question had perhaps a more limited scope than the others, showing wi-fi access points west of London. Most candidates described the distribution of these points well suggesting how this distance-decay pattern might be caused. The roles of population density, rurality and business were perhaps less well described. As with the previous question candidates tended to deal with one aspect of this rather than to develop a broader explanation. Few identified the role of wi-fi points at transport hubs like Heathrow or train stations, the M4, or the fact that this was a map of BT public wi-fi provision and so did not include other providers or home access particularly in suburban London.

Example 8 Good linkage of theory and knowledge to resource.

(a) Suggest reasons for the variation in the number and location of wi-fi access points shown.

(10)

There are more wi-fi points in and close to London compared to less populated rural areas. This could be because London is the capital and so economically strong and therefore there are many large businesses and wealthy people congregated in these areas who have paid for the wi-fi access points. Rural areas have fewer if any wi-fi access points as the population of these areas are fewer than that of London so less are needed. Also physical remoteness of rural areas may mean that it is difficult for wi-fi access to be set up as communication technology in the highlands of Scotland. Because of the remoteness it would not be economically feasible to set up the wi-fi access points here. Also rural areas



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Examiner Comments

Describes distribution, and links to distance decay idea. Also notices difficulty of wi-fi establishment in remoter areas and uses example to support.

3(b) This question focussed firstly on access to services in rural areas. Many candidates were able to identify issues relating to poor public transport, leisure, health care and employment. The wi-fi resource from question 3(a) also triggered some late additions to responses. The question of marginalised groups was less well addressed and few went beyond the basic idea of age. More discerning answers discussed those without cars, children / youths and the disabled. There were some good examples used from Norfolk (using the Commission for Rural Communities resources <http://www.ruralcommunities.gov.uk/>), Cornwall and Wales. Some candidates chose an LDC context, although these again, often lacked reference to any particular groups.

Example 8 Candidate recognises different groups.

Access to transport can also have an effect on creating marginalised groups as in rural areas transport is needed to get to services like supermarkets, healthcare and work. However in rural areas the transport systems are poor and not everyone can drive or afford to run a car therefore creating marginalised groups as they are unable to do what they want to do. This is especially a problem for young people, teenagers and the elderly as most of the people in these groups can't drive and with poor transport networks in rural areas they struggle to get around. For teenagers and young people this may be to get to education or to be able to see friends creating



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Examiner Comments

It was important to identify/state different groups.

3(c) This question and its equivalent in 4(c) were relatively demanding. This was about the need to reduce inequality. Most candidates were able to deliver a good range of fieldwork and research ideas but some did miss this emphasis on dealing with rather than analysing inequality. The very best answers not only focussed on strategies but tried to evaluate their successes through reference to change over time. Weaker responses were case-study based, with little or not reference to fieldwork and research. There were some excellent examples of fieldwork in rural Norfolk and urban Birmingham. Writing about both urban and rural cost some students valuable time for no reward as the question required either urban or rural.

Example 9 Discusses idea of change over time.

As part of Secondary research, I would look at an updated version of WIND to see if the area had benefited from the development. I would also research to find out how the local people were involved as it is known these days that local involvement gives people a sense of pride & ownership, therefore being more sustainable for the future. I could then use old & ~~land~~ new land use maps using GIS to see how the environmental quality of the area had changed, hopefully for the better, also using old photos with those I would take for a deeper comparison. Police information ~~on~~ on crime figures would also be an interesting comparison. Also, I would look into the 'meals on wheels' initiative, local people using their own cars to deliver healthy, hot



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Examiner Comments

This candidate appreciates the need to look at change to evaluate success of strategies. Few candidates provided examples of strategies that could be linked to a particular place

4(a) The data in this question was often well used and the need to rebrand was easily linked to issues of unemployment, decline of industries or the unsuitability of such locations as modern growth poles (whether peripheral or obsolete). Skegness was identified by all as having a range of economic and social problems, but the differences between here and the resorts of Blackpool and Lowestoft were not always identified or commented on. The population age and migration data were less well used. There were some very good answers which dealt with a range of needs to rebrand but the weaker responses were too descriptive or repetitive.

Example 10 Good use of data to support ideas.

(a) Suggest how the information shows that some seaside towns are in **greater need** of rebranding.

(10)

Stegness seems to be in greater need of rebranding, as out of the 3 seaside towns it has the lowest Male average hourly earnings which suggests the economy isn't as strong as the others. It also has the highest percent of people aged over 60, ^{almost} 10% over the UK average. This suggests it is in need of rebranding as it could be bringing in younger generations and families, who would boost the economy if it was to be rebranded. Also, it has ~~the~~ almost double the amount of working age benefit claimers. This could be due to lack of tourists as in some rural areas, such as Cornwall, Tourists ^{in business} alone causes 25% of ^{direct} employment and also employs a lot of indirect employment such as shopkeepers, etc.



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Examiner Comments

This candidate appreciates the need to look at change to evaluate success of strategies. Few candidates provided examples of strategies that could be linked to a particular place

4(b) Sport and leisure development is often used as a 'catalyst' for rebranding. Candidates used a wide range of case studies to support their responses. For most candidates this meant a lavish description of the Sydney Olympics, London 2012 or the Commonwealth Games in Manchester. Another popular choice of example was 'cool Cornwall' with its extreme sports, the Eden centre and restaurant developments. There were many very good answers identifying ideas like, publicity, job creation, economic development and the legacy of transport infrastructure, housing and recreation. The best responses offered some evaluation of the likely success of such ventures.

Example 11 An answer with lots of location depth and detail.

(b) Describe how some places have used sport and leisure as a **catalyst** to 'kick-start' rebranding. (10)

Manchester held the commonwealth games in 2002 this was bid by the cities. Manchester won the bid due to the immense rebranding that occurred to host the games. They built the new sports facilities such as the 'Manchester Velodrome' and other sporting stadiums. The transport facilities were also upgraded in order to cope with the travel within the games. This included new bus routes, trams with the city and regenerated pedestrian walkways. The 'kick start' was in that the facilities built were used after the games and have revolutionised and regenerated Manchester as a city. This is on a fairly local scale though, which is in contrast to the Sydney Olympics which 'kick-started' their city as a green city. The Sydney Olympic games 2000. branded itself



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A well focused response with a good deal of detail linked to the question.

4(c) This question had similarities with 3c above and was aimed at judging the success of the rebranding solutions. Flagship schemes were common scenarios as fieldwork after rebranding was compared with research into what it was like before. Success was calculated using cost-benefit and environmental impact analysis. CBDs, sports stadia and seaside resorts were all used well. Again the idea of change over time should have been identified for the high level responses.

Example 12 Idea of change over time – linked to success.

one other thing I would do would be to compare photos of the area, seeing if the rebranded area is more appealing than the area before hand. If it was not then the rebrand would have unsuccessful as a negative image would not attract people to be area.



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Sometimes just simple ideas such as using photos can be well rewarded when they are given a context. In this instance change over time. This answer could have been improved by saying 'how' that could be done, where the possible sources of old pictures might come from.

Statistics**Overall Subject Grade Boundaries**

Grade	A	B	C	D	E
Overall subject grade boundaries	50	46	42	38	34
Uniform Mark	64	56	48	40	32

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