TASMANIAN

SECONDARY

ASSESSMENT

BOARD

**GG833**

*Geography*

**2002 External Examination Report**

## General Comments

250 candidates sat the paper compared with 282 in 2001 and 278 in 2000. Criteria 2, 6, 8, 9, 10 were externally assessed. Criterion 6 and 8 were moderated in 2002. This year, two A4 information sheets accompanied the Population Data sheet. These information sheets included world population distribution plus the natural environments maps, tables of data and climatic information.

The external exam revealed the following:

1.  Candidates are not revising their definitions thoroughly, (for example, urbanisation) and are giving vague, rambling answers.

2.  Many have a limited knowledge of important aspects of the syllabus, for example, demographic transition (its definition, diagram, how it works, examples, its value etc) and age sex structures.

3.  Spelling of subject specific terminology once again is a matter of concern. Candidates at this level must be able to spell geographic terms and particularly if they are spelt on the question paper. An example of this is the term "sparsely" which was spelt very imaginatively, yet was correctly spelt on the paper in front of every candidate!!!!

4.  Candidates must be careful to read the questions carefully and follow the instructions. Tables were often not filled out correctly because of this. Some candidates tend to combine parts of questions, for example parts i and ii must be answered separately, otherwise ratings will be affected.

The remainder of this report contains specific comments from individual assessors responsible for particular questions.

## Question 1

There were two parts to this question with a time allocation of 15 minutes each. The answers would be expected to be about one page for each part. Some answers were 3 to 4 pages. However, too many answers were only half a page to a page in total, for both parts (a) and (b). In many of these answers there was not enough detail in the description or information in the explanation to achieve anything more than a C rating on both criteria 2 and 8.

In part (a), candidates were asked to describe the pattern of distribution of the world's sparsely populated areas, illustrating their answer with examples – from the Population Data Sheet, Information Sheet and case studies. The best answers started with an opening sentence (or two) describing the world distribution of sparsely populated areas. They included comments like "*they cover a majority of the earth's surface*", or "*they are on every continent*". They then described **in detail** the location of all the sparsely populated areas (naming regions and countries). Some answers described the location continent by continent, while others used the natural environments, describing the location of all the sparsely populated areas for each relevant environment. They wrote a short paragraph on each continent or environment. To describe fully, in detail and naming places, is a skill that candidates need to learn and practice.

In part (a), candidates were only asked to describe, because the explanation was in part (b). However, many candidates gave explanations or reasons, sometimes detailed, in this part of the question. This is generally a waste of time, because you can only be assessed on your description. Some also described the densely and moderately populated areas, but this was also not relevant to this question on sparsely populated areas. There was no need to draw maps of population distribution or natural environments, because they were already provided. Some candidates did use a map to name regions mentioned in their description.

In part (b), candidates were asked to discuss the range of environmental factors which account for the sparsely populated areas, for either the world or a country they had studied.   Most candidates chose the world.   In this case, it was more efficient, given the time constraint, to explain the reasons for the sparsely populated areas by natural environment. Those candidates who explained reasons continent by continent had a lot of repetition of factors and their characteristics.   The best answers discussed the environmental factors of temperature, rainfall, access to water, altitude, relief (topography), soils, vegetation and natural resources, relevant to each area or the country they had studied.   They included climate evidence from the Information Sheet.   They related environmental factors to the carrying capacity of an area, in other words the reasons why these areas are not able to support high population densities.   They wrote a paragraph on each environment or continent or environmental factor (depending on how they had organised their answer).  There was no need in this question to discuss the environmental factors for densely populated areas or to discuss other factors, such as historical, economic or social, in detail.   Neither was relevant to the question.

Candidates need to use geographical terminology, like north, south, east and west, so that we do not have '*people living under the equator*' or '*going up the continent*'.  For those candidates who did, a surprising number were confused with their directions, especially east and west, which led to incorrect statements, such as 'eastern China is sparsely populated' and 'Antarctica in the north'.   In the spelling stakes, too many people were eating *dessert*, instead of surviving in the *desert* and how many different ways can you spell *sparsely* (when it was written on the exam paper)?  This is a straight-forward question and candidates should have been able to achieve high ratings.

**Question  2**

This question assessed criterion nine and consisted of two parts.  Candidates had to use the population data sheet as well as the information sheet to answer the first part.

In (a) (i) candidates had to select two countries which represented the current position in demographic transition for country X and two for country Y.  Figure three had the birth and death rates for country X (Sweden) and for country Y (India).  The best examples for X included, Sweden, Germany, Croatia and Italy.  Less appropriate were Russia, Ukraine, Hungary and Latvia because of their higher rates of natural decrease.  Norway, France, Australia, New Zealand and the United States of America were also not appropriate because they still have higher rates of natural increase.

The most popular choices for Y were India, Bangladesh, South Africa, Lebanon, Vietnam and Turkey.  Incorrect were the poorest countries in Africa and Asia, which still show no real signs of a rapid birth rate decline.

Candidates must be careful when filling out tables because ten percent put their poorer countries as X and their richer countries as Y.  A smaller percentage only filled in one country for each of X and Y.

Part (a) (ii) required candidates to indicate the current relevant stage in the demographic transition for the chosen countries.  Acceptable for country X was either stage four or five and for country Y it was definitely stage three, because of the declining birth rate.  Candidates who put different stages for the four countries including stage one had limited ideas of the stages.

The final part of (a) was the justification of the reasons for the choice of countries.  Country X is now in the declining stage of demographic transition, taking two hundred years to reach that stage with death rates now exceeding birth rates.  Country Y has had sharply declining death rates since 1945 and birth rates have fallen rapidly since 1970.  Candidates noted the reasons for the death rate decline but were unsure of the reasons for birth rate declines.

Part (b) consisted of a two part question.  Firstly a definition of demographic transition was needed and the  its usefulness to the study of world population needed to be assessed.  Answers to this part were very brief (approximately a quarter to half a page for fifteen minutes).  Essentially demographic transition is a model of population change over time based upon the Northern and Western European population experiences since the Industrial Revolution.  This model consists of four or five separate and distinct stages.

Its usefulness was very briefly answered.  Candidates could discuss its merits, ie, Less Developed Countries in stages 20 andthree have a period of high rates of natural increase while More Developed Countries in stages four and five are facing rates of natural decrease.  Using the model enables people to examine past, present and future trends in population growth.

Demographic transition's limitations are that it is Eurocentric and does not take into account differing population experiences, eg. China's One Child Policy and the current births and deaths in sub Saharan Africa. Zimbabwe's current birth and death rates are 29 and 20 and this makes it difficult to allocate a stage to this country.

**Question 3**

Of the 250 candidates, 200 attempted part (a) while 50 attempted part (b). It was very encouraging to see that all candidates attempted parts (i) and (ii) in both options, while only one candidate scored a 'Z' on parts (iii) and (iv).

Either (a) - Criterion 8, parts (i) and (ii):

The better answers were able to compare the two pyramids by methodically describing their overall shape and then going on to describe similarities and differences between them in terms of their base, the balance of the age groups, the way in which each pyramid changed with increasing age. In addition, they dealt with male female differences overall and the idiosyncrasies of the male bulge in pyramid A, as well as the evidence for the baby boom and the echo effect in pyramid B.

For part (ii), better answers explained what they had described in part (i) in a variety of ways – some referred to demographic transition, while others referred to development status and made informed suggestions about which country each pyramid could represent. It was essential to refer to demographic factors (CBR, IMR, and LE) in addition to the associated social, economic and cultural reasons.

In both (i) and (ii), correct reading of the pyramid was important in terms of percentages within cohorts. Candidates were penalised for combining (i) and (ii).

Criterion 6, parts (iii) and (iv):

Most candidates correctly identified the MDC status of pyramid B with ageing as the key problem, but answers needed to deal with the associated problems including falling CBR, shrinking workforce, shrinking tax base, provision of services to both aged and young, lack of pensions and superannuation. Better part (iv) answers made excellent suggestions across a range of fields and discriminated between long and short term planning. The solution of replacement migration, while valid, was often poorly understood. Evaluation was often ignored. Those who did evaluate their suggestions varied in their methodology considerably, with the better ones rounding off their discussion by coming to some sort of conclusion: eg, the urgency of objective measurement of the current situation and then ongoing evaluation, the desirability/possibility of changing social attitudes/values and/or the need to tackle the problem rather than be defeated by it.

Candidates were heavily penalised for drawing case study material from current LDCs.
Almost all candidates failed to take advantage of the time saving instruction in (iii) to 'list' the problems. Reading question requirements correctly is beneficial.

Or (b) - Criterion 8, parts (i) and (ii):

The definition of urbanisation was, on the whole, very poorly handled. Many candidates wrongly gave definitions of rural-urban migration or urban growth. In analysing the table, the best answers described the basic difference in MDC and LDC trends, as well as variations in degree between the LDC nations. It is important to note the table refers to percentages, not raw numbers, and so the impact on any government where there is an approximate three fold increase is considerable. Many candidates failed to explain the trends they showed, and even though they were given the opportunity, few used case studies to support their answers.

Criterion 6, parts (iii) and (iv):

Here the better answers focussed on the problems of LDCs concisely, and then elaborated on possible solutions supporting their answers with numerous excellent examples and/or case studies. Candidates who dealt with MDC cities were penalised.

**Question 4**

Most candidates interpreted the question correctly and were able to give satisfactory answers. Better candidates mentioned the following:

(a)     Of the population of 35 million 45% is dependant. The 24-year doubling time would create many problems. Much of the populations' child- bearing years were still to come. The low life expectancy of 53 years and high infant mortality rate means that there would be many insurance births. It would be very difficult and expensive to provide basic services, such as food, shelter, health care and education for so many young people. Because the GNP is so low and only 20% of the population is urban other difficulties arise. Problems such as over-crowding, lack of housing, aids and other diseases, vicious cycle of poverty, malnutrition, crime, pollution, congested traffic. NB. Candidates must mention why the increasing number of younger people is a problem.

(b)     Suggested solutions to these problems may be: to introduce anti-natal policies, such as those in China, Iran, Vietnam, Bangladesh and Mauritius. The introduction of policies such as education and health for all. Lifting the age of marriage, increasing the status of women, ensuring that men were equally involved, providing better health care and vaccination programs, literacy and agriculture programs. A package of policies would work best. Encouraging people to move away from the cities, as in Brazil and China, to prevent shanties and overcrowding. Spending more money in rural areas. Encouraging out migration as guest workers. Rebuilding cities to cope with urban sprawl such as in Cairo. Encourage recycling as in Brazil where recycled items are exchanged for food, bus tickets etc. Discouraging pollution such as Mexico coloured cars and number plate policies. Assistance from other countries or loans from the World Bank. NB Those who mentioned case studies tended to provide better answers.

(c)     Better candidates predicted the outcome of the four or five solutions they had provided. Many mentioned education, as being the key and that family planning in isolation would not work; a package of policies would have the most success. Surveys were suggested and analysis of demographic statistics such as the B/R, D/R, IMR, doubling time, LE, % of population and access to contraceptives etc, to determine the success of their policies over time. Once again the use of case study work generally enhanced answers. Poorer candidates did not predict or evaluate the success of their proposal.

**Question 5**

The essay question was generally well answered. Topics covered varied enormously, some of the more successful topics discussed are listed below . Many candidates were knowledgeable about their issue and used relevant examples in the text of their essay. There was a notable disparity between the ratings for criterion 2 and 9 with that of criterion 10 with ratings being higher on average for criterion 2 and 9. Criterion 10 gained a high rating if candidates considered change over time by quoting appropriate statistical examples, mapping the distribution of their issue either by drawing information on the world map outline provided or by including a hand drawn map, and discussing the spatial interaction and association of their issue. Maps were often included with the essay but they were not always well executed. It is essential that they are well labelled, accurate, legible and referred to in the written part of the essay.

Candidates must choose a topic for their essay that is spatial and an issue which means different points of view can be discussed. A common error was for candidates not to identify their issue. It is wise to outline the issue in the introductory paragraph. Giving the essay a title does not necessarily identify the issue the essay is addressing. Sound exam technique would be for candidates to use the structure provided in the question. It is a good guide for candidates to follow and it is recommended that they use this as a plan for their essay. The average length of essays was three to four pages although several were only one and a half pages long. Some essays were subjective and contained few if any facts. In a number of cases the essay was purely descriptive.

Some of the more successful topics covered included:
Child labour, Urbanisation, Mega dams, Issues related to Water, Impact of exotic species, Tropical Forests, The Amazon, AIDs, Coral Reefs, Salinity, The Population Debate, Air Pollution, Global Warming, Feeding the World and Landmines.

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