



Cambridge International AS & A Level

GEOGRAPHY

9696/22

Paper 2 Core Human Geography

May/June 2025

MARK SCHEME

Maximum Mark: 60

Published

This mark scheme is published as an aid to teachers and candidates, to indicate the requirements of the examination. It shows the basis on which Examiners were instructed to award marks. It does not indicate the details of the discussions that took place at an Examiners' meeting before marking began, which would have considered the acceptability of alternative answers.

Mark schemes should be read in conjunction with the question paper and the Principal Examiner Report for Teachers.

Cambridge International will not enter into discussions about these mark schemes.

Cambridge International is publishing the mark schemes for the May/June 2025 series for most Cambridge IGCSE, Cambridge International A and AS Level components, and some Cambridge O Level components.

This document consists of **20** printed pages.

Generic Marking Principles

These general marking principles must be applied by all examiners when marking candidate answers. They should be applied alongside the specific content of the mark scheme or generic level descriptions for a question. Each question paper and mark scheme will also comply with these marking principles.

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 1:

Marks must be awarded in line with:

- the specific content of the mark scheme or the generic level descriptors for the question
- the specific skills defined in the mark scheme or in the generic level descriptors for the question
- the standard of response required by a candidate as exemplified by the standardisation scripts.

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 2:

Marks awarded are always **whole marks** (not half marks, or other fractions).

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 3:

Marks must be awarded **positively**:

- marks are awarded for correct/valid answers, as defined in the mark scheme. However, credit is given for valid answers which go beyond the scope of the syllabus and mark scheme, referring to your Team Leader as appropriate
- marks are awarded when candidates clearly demonstrate what they know and can do
- marks are not deducted for errors
- marks are not deducted for omissions
- answers should only be judged on the quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar when these features are specifically assessed by the question as indicated by the mark scheme. The meaning, however, should be unambiguous.

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 4:

Rules must be applied consistently, e.g. in situations where candidates have not followed instructions or in the application of generic level descriptors.

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 5:

Marks should be awarded using the full range of marks defined in the mark scheme for the question (however; the use of the full mark range may be limited according to the quality of the candidate responses seen).

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 6:

Marks awarded are based solely on the requirements as defined in the mark scheme. Marks should not be awarded with grade thresholds or grade descriptors in mind.

Annotations guidance for centres

Examiners use a system of annotations as a shorthand for communicating their marking decisions to one another. Examiners are trained during the standardisation process on how and when to use annotations. The purpose of annotations is to inform the standardisation and monitoring processes and guide the supervising examiners when they are checking the work of examiners within their team. The meaning of annotations and how they are used is specific to each component and is understood by all examiners who mark the component.

We publish annotations in our mark schemes to help centres understand the annotations they may see on copies of scripts. Note that there may not be a direct correlation between the number of annotations on a script and the mark awarded. Similarly, the use of an annotation may not be an indication of the quality of the response.

The annotations listed below were available to examiners marking this component in this series.

Annotations

Annotation	Meaning	Use
	Correct point	Point-marked questions only: Section A, Section B part (a)
	Incorrect	Point-marked questions only: Section A, Section B part (a)
	Level 4	Levels-marked questions only: Section B part (c)
	Level 3	Levels-marked questions only: Section B parts (b) and (c)
	Level 2	Levels-marked questions only: Section B parts (b) and (c)
	Level 1	Levels-marked questions only: Section B parts (b) and (c)
	Level 0 – No creditable response	Levels-marked questions only: Section B parts (b) and (c)
Highlighter	Creditworthy part of an extended response	Levels-marked questions only: Section B parts (b) and (c)
	Evaluative point	Levels-marked questions only: Section B part (c)
	Omission or further development/ detail needed to gain credit	All questions
	Unclear or validity is doubted	All questions
	Developed point	All questions

Annotation	Meaning	Use
EG	Appropriate example or case study given	All questions
IRRL	Irrelevant	All questions
NAQ	Material that does not answer the question	All questions
	Highlighting a significant part of an extended response – to be used with another annotation e.g. IRRL or EVAL	Levels-marked questions only: Section B parts (b) and (c)
SEEN	1. Diagram or essay plan has been seen but no specific credit given 2. Additional page has been checked	1. Any diagrams or essay plans 2. All blank pages in the provided generic answer booklet and/or extension answer booklet(s).
R	Rubric error	Optional questions only (place at start of question not being credited): Section B (Candidates answer one question)

Examiners must consider the following guidance when marking the essay questions:

Candidates are free to develop their own approach to the question and responses will vary depending on the approach chosen. Whichever approach is chosen, essays which address the question and support their argument with relevant examples will be credited. There may be detailed consideration of a case study/one or more examples, or a broadly conceived response, drawing on several examples to illustrate the factors involved.

Section A

Answer **all** questions in this section. All questions are worth 10 marks.

Population/Migration

Question	Answer	Marks
1(a)	Fig. 1.1 shows the population change for Australia (an HIC in Oceania) and Romania (an MIC in Europe), 1980–2020. Using Fig. 1.1, compare the population change for Australia and Romania. A comparison could include both similarities and differences. Two separate descriptions do not make a comparison – max. 1 mark. Comparisons could include: • Australia increased to 26 million (rise of 11 million) by 2020 but Romania fell to 19 million by 2020 (a fall of 3 million) • Australia has seen a steady rise in population increasing after 2005 whilst Romania rose to 1990 then fell • Romania and Australia both had an increase between 1980 and 1990 1 mark for a simple comparison, 2 marks for a developed comparison (such as such as use of data) up to the maximum.	3
1(b)	Suggest <u>two</u> reasons for the population change in Romania between 1990 and 2020. Many candidates will quote logical pushes and pulls to explain net migration loss from the area such as unemployment or other aspects such as chain migration, transport improvements, etc. Reasons could include: • demographic – rapid out-migration, fall in BR but rise in DR, ageing population, women choosing to have fewer/no children and having children later • economic e.g. recession, crop failures, limited work opportunities • social e.g. unrest, rising crime • political e.g. opening of links with the west of Europe • environmental e.g. pollution • population policies 1 mark for a simple reason, 2 marks for a developed reason (with detail or an example).	3

Question	Answer	Marks
1(c)	Explain why some countries with large areas have relatively low population numbers. Reasons could include: • much is inhospitable e.g. desert; mountain; lack of water; extreme climate • much is agricultural which tends to have a lower population • historical reasons e.g. Australia – settler society is relatively recent/mostly on the coast • areas of conflict – current or in the past • few areas of development/resources • difficult to navigate/build transport, power infrastructure 1 mark for a simple explanation, 2 marks for a developed explanation (with detail or an example).	4

Population/Migration/Settlement dynamics

Question	Answer	Marks
2(a)	Fig. 2.1 shows the percentage of the population who were born in another country, 2015. Describe the pattern of population who were born in another country shown in Fig. 2.1. Description of the <u>pattern</u> could include: • very uneven • areas with high % tend to be HICs and areas with low % are MICs/LICs • areas with high % are North America, Europe and Australasia • there are some anomalous high areas e.g. Saudi Arabia, Kazakhstan • areas with low % are in South America, Africa and Asia but there are anomalies e.g. two countries in Africa (Libya and Gabon) are higher (10.0–19.9%) • low % in Central America, South America, southern Asia and Middle East but there are anomalies e.g. Belize • Countries in higher latitudes north of the equator (north of Tropic of Cancer) have higher %s. • Low %s in the Tropics. 1 mark for each descriptive point. Max. 1 mark if no reference to any pattern.	4
2(b)	Suggest <u>two</u> reasons why some countries attract a high number of international migrants. This may be a list of relative pull factors. Reasons could include: • economic e.g. more chance of employment • social e.g. range of housing, high level of services/facilities (such as education, health care). • cultural e.g. same language, religious freedom • political e.g. secure/safe, low taxes, democracy, freedom of movement agreements, invitations to migrants, shared historical links e.g. Commonwealth • environmental e.g. pleasant climate, few hazards, little pollution 1 mark for each reason.	2

Question	Answer	Marks
2(c)	Explain why international migrants are often concentrated in inner city areas of the receiving/destination country. Reasons could include: • that is where the most jobs/employment are • cheaper housing (zone of decay) • cultural/religious centres in area for support – idea of chain migration • main area for access to central services and facilities, e.g. education • near CBD (jobs, shops, etc.) e.g. hospitality, light manufacturing jobs • transport hub • a range of types of accommodation 1 mark for a simple explanation, 2 marks for a developed explanation (with detail or an example).	4

Settlement dynamics

Question	Answer	Marks
3(a)	Fig. 3.1 is a photograph which shows a settlement in the Comas district of Lima, Peru, an MIC in South America. Suggest <u>three</u> problems for the people living in the settlement shown in Fig. 3.1. Problems could include: • risk of landslides • limited access to services – power, sewage, running water • no greenery • transport/access difficult • limited size of buildings; quality of the houses 1 mark for each problem. If clearly not related to the photograph, max. 1 mark.	3
3(b)	Suggest <u>two</u> advantages for the people of living in the settlement shown in Fig. 3.1. Advantages could include: • some services (pipelines/cables exist, possibly evidence of refuse sorting/collection) • space – not on top of each other • view • build (and paint) as you want • affordable – look to be self-built • sense of community, as shared experiences in developing the settlement • there is a through road (mid slope) – transport links • as buildings look uniform, possibly organised/government supported scheme to improve the housing 1 mark for each advantage. If clearly not related to the photograph, max. 1 mark.	2

Question	Answer	Marks
3(c)	Explain why it is often difficult for a government to improve shanty towns (squatter settlements). Difficulties could include: • locals resist improvements – who is deciding on the scheme, top down vs. bottom up • cost • priorities are elsewhere • lack of information on what is needed/existing infrastructure • constantly changing population • access – physical factors of site such as steep slopes, roads/pathways • unsafe (may be controlled by gangs) • scale – large proportions of the urban population live in informal settlements in some cities, need to prioritise • temporary relocation issues • legality of ownership of land • success could increase the number of new arrivals (feedback loop) • other 1 mark for a simple explanation, 2 marks for a developed explanation (with detail or an example).	5

Section B

Answer **one** question from this section. All questions are worth 30 marks.

Population

Question	Answer	Marks
4(a)(i)	Outline the concept of ‘carrying capacity’. The concept of carrying capacity could be outlined as: - the maximum number of population (1) within a population that an area, or range (1), is able to sustain (1) - maximum number of population an area can support from its existing resources - once this threshold is breached, the quality of life decreases and the population will decline 1 mark for idea of maximum number of population. 2nd/3rd mark for relating it to resources, quality of life, or area or environment, etc.	3
4(a)(ii)	Explain why it is difficult to assess the carrying capacity of an area. Reasons could include: - there are different meanings of the term - both population and resources are dynamic, so ‘capacity’ is constantly changing - how can it be assessed – what measures to use? - changes in technology keeps changing the ‘capacity’ - may differ in terms of economic, social, environmental sustainability - what scale of area offers measurement possibilities? - environmental pressures e.g. natural disasters, climate change, deforestation – change capacity 1 mark for a simple explanation, 2 marks for a developed explanation (with detail or an example).	4

Question	Answer	Marks
4(b)	With the aid of examples, explain the difficulties for an area caused by overpopulation. Overpopulation is when large numbers of people cannot be supported by the amount of food, resources and space available. Difficulties could include: • economic e.g. cost of supporting population, unemployment, famine, need to find more resources • social e.g. lack of housing, lack of services/facilities • political e.g. rising discontent = friction • environmental e.g. soil erosion, pollution, droughts, environmental destruction Max. 4 marks if no valid examples. Award marks based on the quality of explanation and breadth of the response using the marking levels below. Level 3 (6–8) Response clearly explains the difficulties for an area caused by overpopulation. Response is well founded in detailed knowledge and strong conceptual understanding of the topic. Examples used are appropriate and integrated effectively into the response. Level 2 (3–5) Response explains the difficulties for an area caused by overpopulation. Response develops on a largely secure base of knowledge and understanding. Examples may lack detail or development. Level 1 (1–2) Response is largely descriptive about the difficulties for an area caused by overpopulation. Knowledge is basic and understanding may be inaccurate. Examples are in name only or lacking entirely. Level 0 (0) No creditable response.	8

Question	Answer	Marks
4(c)	‘A high birth rate in LICs will prevent their economic growth.’ With the aid of examples, how far do you agree with this statement? This considers the balance of BR/DR and their link to economic growth/decline. Some candidates may see it as Malthus vs. Boserup. Net migration may also play a part. Supporting evidence could include: • excessive population growth absorbs funds so limited investment • higher costs of supporting a youthful population • loss of key population by net out-migration • increased risk of famine – links to productivity • higher unemployment – social unrest Evidence to the contrary could include: • increased pool of labour (could attract TNCs) • more people to develop as yet undeveloped areas/resources • increased demand as more population • more dynamic innovative population Higher level responses may consider that it would vary with the nature of the population, characteristic of the LIC, scale/location, etc. Award marks based on the quality of the response using the marking levels below. Level 4 (12–15) Response thoroughly assesses the extent to which a high birth rate in LICs will prevent their economic growth. Examples used are appropriate and integrated effectively into the response. Response is well founded in detailed knowledge and strong conceptual understanding of the topic. Level 3 (8–11) Response assesses the extent to which a high birth rate in LICs will prevent their economic growth but may be unbalanced. Examples may lack detail or development. Response develops on a largely secure base of knowledge and understanding. Level 2 (4–7) Response shows general knowledge and understanding of the extent to which a high birth rate in LICs will prevent their economic growth. Response is mainly descriptive or explanatory with limited use of examples and understanding of the topic may be partial or inaccurate. Some concluding remarks. General responses without the use of example(s) will not get above the middle of Level 2 (6 marks). Level 1 (1–3) Response may broadly discuss high birth rates in LICs but does not address the question and does not come to a convincing conclusion. Response is descriptive, knowledge is basic and understanding is poor. Level 0 (0) No creditable response.	15

Migration/Settlement dynamics

Question	Answer	Marks
5(a)	Describe the causes of urban to urban migration. Note: this does not include circulation such as commuting. Causes could include: • demographic e.g. for marriage, idea of step migration related to life stages and settlement hierarchy • economic e.g. new job, retirement, increased or decreased wealth • social e.g. to live in same culture/ethnic group, move away from insecure city, nearer to higher quality services such as education • political e.g. to a more secure area • environmental e.g. to a more pleasant environment such as to the coastal city 1 mark for a simple description, 2 marks for a developed description (such as detail or an example) up to the maximum.	7

Question	Answer	Marks
5(b)	With the aid of examples, explain why <u>intra-urban</u> migration (within the same urban area) has increased in recent years. Candidates may consider economic, social, environmental push and pull factors but equally there are enabling factors such as: • improved mobility/transport • wider knowledge of other areas within city via media, internet, etc. • greater education so more choice of employment • reduction in family ties/cultural restrictions on moving • increased wealth so can afford to move, life cycle • government policy such as decentralisation, redevelopment/urban renewal, improvement/resettlement schemes in squatter settlements • ageing populations in HICs/MICs • increase in single adult households Award marks based on the quality of explanation and breadth of the response using the marking levels below. Level 3 (6–8) Response clearly explains why <u>intra-urban</u> migration (within the same urban area) has increased in recent years. Response is well founded in detailed knowledge and strong conceptual understanding of the topic. Examples used are appropriate and integrated effectively into the response. Level 2 (3–5) Response explains why <u>intra-urban</u> migration (within the same urban area) has increased in recent years. Response develops on a largely secure base of knowledge and understanding. Examples may lack detail or development. Level 1 (1–2) Response is largely descriptive about <u>intra-urban</u> migration (within the same urban area). Knowledge is basic and understanding may be inaccurate. Examples are in name only or lacking entirely. Level 0 (0) No creditable response.	8

Question	Answer	Marks
5(c)	With the aid of examples, how far do you agree that it is difficult for governments to manage <u>rural to urban</u> migration? Management of internal migration often depends on the nature of the political regime e.g. China does but USA does not. Difficulties could include: • lack of information on movements • it goes against freedom of choice • it is a natural/large scale process in many countries • governments may not want to as it reduces rural pressure • it is not easy to distinguish between rural and urban areas • lack of economic investment in rural areas due to political priorities/lack of funds • corruption in urban areas/lack of control of pull factors • difficult to change peoples' perceptions of urban areas – bright lights, pull factors Management may be made easier by: • using planning controls/green belts, etc. • using local taxes • managing the housing market • managing transport • the location of public services, etc. • urban areas become congested so reducing or reversing rural to urban migration Award marks based on the quality of the response using the marking levels below. Level 4 (12–15) Response thoroughly assesses the extent to which it is difficult for governments to manage <u>rural to urban</u> migration. Examples used are appropriate and integrated effectively into the response. Response is well founded in detailed knowledge and strong conceptual understanding of the topic. Level 3 (8–11) Response assesses the extent to which it is difficult for governments to manage <u>rural to urban</u> migration but may be unbalanced. Examples may lack detail or development. Response develops on a largely secure base of knowledge and understanding. Level 2 (4–7) Response shows general knowledge and understanding of the extent to which it is difficult for governments to manage <u>rural to urban</u> migration. Response is mainly descriptive or explanatory with limited use of examples and understanding of the topic may be partial or inaccurate. Some concluding remarks. General responses without the use of example(s) will not get above the middle of Level 2 (6 marks).	15

Question	Answer	Marks
5(c)	Level 1 (1–3) Response may broadly discuss how governments can manage <u>rural to urban</u> migration but does not address the question and does not come to a convincing conclusion. Response is descriptive, knowledge is basic and understanding is poor. Level 0 (0) No creditable response.	

Population/Migration/Settlement dynamics

Question	Answer	Marks
6(a)	Describe the characteristics of central business districts (CBDs). Characteristics could include: • building type/height • land uses – commercial, retail, offices, limited open space, etc. • population – low, may be wealthy, etc. • communication and transport hub/termini/focus • high land values/rates/taxes • entertainment centres • high footfall • historical and cultural buildings • concentration of TNCs, HQs, financial services, hospitality/hotels • horizontal zoning, grouping of functions • vertical zoning, retail at street level, residential/offices at higher level • dynamic areas – urban renewal, redevelopment, etc. • other 1 mark for a simple description, 2 marks for a developed description (such as detail or an example) up to the maximum.	7

Question	Answer	Marks
6(b)	With the aid of examples, explain why there are challenges for many CBDs. Note: challenges may differ between HICs and MICs/LICs. Challenges could include: • demographic e.g. loss of population – idea of hollow centre • economic e.g. movement out of offices, shops, etc. to cheaper peripheral sites, traffic congestion/pollution charges, ageing infrastructure • social e.g. social tensions, increased crime • political e.g. terror attacks, taxation issues, redevelopment (such as conflicts between developers/environmental groups) • environmental e.g. air pollution, micro-climate, physical space Max. 4 marks if no valid examples. Award marks based on the quality of explanation and breadth of the response using the marking levels below. Level 3 (6–8) Response clearly explains why there are challenges for many CBDs. Response is well founded in detailed knowledge and strong conceptual understanding of the topic. Examples used are appropriate and integrated effectively into the response. Level 2 (3–5) Response explains why there are challenges for many CBDs. Response develops on a largely secure base of knowledge and understanding. Examples may lack detail or development. Level 1 (1–2) Response is largely descriptive about CBDs. Knowledge is basic and understanding may be inaccurate. Examples are in name only or lacking entirely. Level 0 (0) No creditable response.	8

Question	Answer	Marks
6(c)	‘There is a limit to how large a city can grow in size.’ With the aid of examples, how far do you agree with this statement? Candidates may consider this is about diseconomies of scale so may agree due to increased problems such as: • demographic e.g. excessive population • economic e.g. increased transport costs, power supply, job availability • social e.g. increased social fragmentation/tension, increased costs of providing services • political e.g. difficult to plan/control, green belt policies • environmental e.g. increased pollution/waste, micro-climate • physical e.g. urban sprawl constrained by relief/coast/river Other candidates may disagree and consider the benefits of larger scale operation or even consider the concept of megalopolis. Population can increase if a city grows upwards and population density increases. Candidates could also consider over time – urbanisation is ‘complete’ in HICs, but happening with economic development in MICs/LICs, possibly linking to demographic transition. Award marks based on the quality of the response using the marking levels below. Level 4 (12–15) Response thoroughly assesses the extent to which there is a limit to how large a city can grow in size. Examples used are appropriate and integrated effectively into the response. Response is well founded in detailed knowledge and strong conceptual understanding of the topic. Level 3 (8–11) Response assesses the extent to which there is a limit to how large a city can grow in size but may be unbalanced. Examples may lack detail or development. Response develops on a largely secure base of knowledge and understanding. Level 2 (4–7) Response shows general knowledge and understanding of the extent to which there is a limit to how large a city can grow in size. Response is mainly descriptive or explanatory with limited use of examples and understanding of the topic may be partial or inaccurate. Some concluding remarks. General responses without the use of example(s) will not get above the middle of Level 2 (6 marks). Level 1 (1–3) Response may broadly discuss city growth but does not address the question and does not come to a convincing conclusion. Response is descriptive, knowledge is basic and understanding is poor. Level 0 (0) No creditable response.	15