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CAMBRIDGE
International Education

Cambridge International AS & A Level

GEOGRAPHY **9696/22**

Paper 2 Core Human Geography **October/November 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 October/November 2025 series for most Cambridge IGCSE, Cambridge International A and AS Level components, and some Cambridge O Level components.

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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.

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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)
L4	Level 4	Levels-marked questions only: Section B part (c)
L3	Level 3	Levels-marked questions only: Section B parts (b) and (c)
L2	Level 2	Levels-marked questions only: Section B parts (b) and (c)
L1	Level 1	Levels-marked questions only: Section B parts (b) and (c)
0	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)
EVAL	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
DEV	Developed point	All questions

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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.

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Section A

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

Population

Question	Answer	Marks
1(a)(i)	**Fig. 1.1 shows the crude death rate for the world, 1950–2020 and estimated to 2100.** **Using Fig. 1.1: state the crude death rate in 1970** 13 deaths per 1000 people or 13/1000	**1**
1(a)(ii)	**Using Fig. 1.1: describe the main changes in crude death rate from 1950 to 2100.** Description could include: • Overall death rate has fallen over the period shown • Overall death rate (quickly) falls between 1950 and 2020 (19 per 1000 to 7.5 per 1000) • Steady decline with some fluctuations / more irregular from 1950–1970 • Anomaly in 1962 when it increased slightly then dropped more quickly • Stabilised 2010–2020 • Then estimated to rise from 2020 (at a slower rate), to 12/1000 in 2100 **1 mark** for each change. **Max. 2 marks** for no accurate data support.	**3**
1(b)	**Suggest <u>two</u> reasons why death rates are high in some countries.** Reasons could include: • Lack of doctors / healthcare / vaccination programmes • Disease • Lack of food / malnutrition / famine • Poor sanitation / lack of clean drinking water • Natural disasters • War • Ageing population structure • Other **1 mark** for each reason.	**2**

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Question	Answer	Marks
1(c)	**Explain how falling death rates may influence birth rates in a country.** Explanations could include: • Falling death rates may lead to a decline in birth rates • There may be an initial lag as birth rates remain high as established social norms remain • Families are reassured their children will survive / infant mortality drops • Less need to have children to support family economically • Other **1 mark** for a simple explanation, **2 marks** for a developed explanation (with detail or an example).	**4**

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Migration

Question	Answer	Marks
2(a)	**Fig. 2.1 shows international migrants as a percentage of the total population, by country, in 2021.** **Describe the distribution of countries with 15.0% and above shown in Fig. 2.1.** Description of the distribution could include: • 15.0% and above largely in northern hemisphere / north of Tropic of Cancer • USA / Canada, many European countries have high proportion • Found in all continents • The distribution is uneven/scattered • Groups in some areas e.g. Australia & New Zealand / North America / Europe / Middle East • Single countries in Africa and South America • Most are HICs • Other **1 mark** for each descriptive point.	**4**
2(b)	**Suggest <u>two</u> economic advantages of international migration for receiving/destination countries.** Economic advantages could include: • Increased labour force / fills labour shortages • Skilled / educated workers • Lower cost of wages than domestic workers • Larger market for sales • Increase entrepreneurial expertise / innovation • Contribute to tax revenue • Other **1 mark** for each reason.	**2**
2(c)	**Explain the social impacts of international migration on receiving/destination countries.** Explanations might include both positive and negative social impacts: • Gain of skills and knowledge • Reduce dependency ratios – could be advantage for ageing population • Cultural change / diversity • Increased demand for services such as education and healthcare • Increased demand for housing • Social tensions • Lack of integration e.g. due to language barriers • Other **1 mark** for a simple explanation, **2 marks** for a developed explanation (with detail or an example).	**4**

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Settlement dynamics

Question	Answer	Marks
3(a)	**Fig. 3.1 is a photograph which shows a railway and station in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, an LIC in Africa.** **Using Fig. 3.1, suggest <u>three</u> advantages for the inhabitants of Addis Ababa of the railway shown.** Advantages could include: • Accessible as close to housing • Increases access into the city centre / to other areas for employment / people can access services / businesses in the area shown • Increases attractiveness of the city to investors – modern transport system • Takes up little space as built along main road (allowing other land uses too) • Reduces traffic / less need to own vehicle (and cheaper for low-income households in surrounding area) • Comfortable / stress free transport • Less air / noise pollution from cars/lorries • Shorter journey times • Other **1 mark** for each advantage. **Max. 2 marks** if no use of evidence from the photograph.	**3**
3(b)	**Suggest <u>three</u> challenges of the railway for the city shown in Fig. 3.1.** Challenges could include: • Construction costs – as along main road • Air / noise pollution for residents during construction • Clearance of buildings or loss of space for construction / relocating land uses • Running costs / maintenance issues • Affordability for passengers • Safety issues of crossing line • Electricity theft • Cuts through neighbourhoods / services on streets • Future proofing for modernising the city – aspirations vs costs • Other **1 mark** for each challenge. **Max. 2 marks** if no use of evidence from the photograph.	**3**

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Question	Answer	Marks
3(c)	**Explain how the competition for space (spatial competition) influences the pattern of urban land values.** Explanations could include: • Different land users will compete with one another for land, motivated by profit maximisation • Low supply with high demand increases land value • Land values usually highest in CBD, where competition is greatest, so activities that can afford this (commercial, financial, high-end services) cluster there • A concentric pattern of land uses develops as competition lessens with distance from PLVI • New areas may be in demand, so value rises in these areas • Bid rent theory • Other **1 mark** for a simple explanation, **2 marks** for a developed explanation (with detail or an example).	**4**

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Section B

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

Population

Question	Answer	Marks
4(a)(i)	**Define the term 'fertility rate'.** Candidates are likely to offer a definition based on either the general fertility rate or the total fertility rate. They are not expected to use the term GFR or TFR specifically. GFR: number of live births **(1)** in a geographic area in a year **(1)** per 1000 women of childbearing age / age 15 to 44 years (or 15–49) **(1)**. TFR: the average number of children **(1)** that would be born to a female over their lifetime **(1)** if they were to experience the exact current age - specific fertility rates through their lifetime **(1)**.	**3**
4(a)(ii)	**Outline how two social factors influence fertility rates.** Social factors may increase or decrease fertility rates or lead to a high or low fertility rate. Social factors could include: • Age of marriage • Age at which females have a first child • Educational opportunities for women and girls • Access to family planning • Emancipation of women / women's rights • Culture/religion/tradition of large families • Fall in infant mortality rates • Other social factors For each factor: **1 mark** for a simple point, **2 marks** for a developed point (with detail or an example).	**4**

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Question	Answer	Marks
4(b)	**With the aid of examples, explain how economic factors may result in low levels of fertility.** Economic factors which result in low levels of fertility could include: • Raising children is expensive (childcare and education costs, laws preventing child labour means they cannot contribute) • Increase in female educational attainment and labour force participation delay childbearing • Improved career opportunities for women / financial independence • Economic incentives to reduce fertility as part of government anti-natal policy (financial rewards as well as economic penalties) • Economic recession • More funds available to improve (e.g. healthcare, food supply) reduces infant and child mortality rates, over longer-term fertility rates will fall • Other **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 how economic factors may result in low levels of fertility. 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 how economic factors may result in low levels of fertility. 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 of factors influencing fertility. Knowledge is basic and understanding may be inaccurate. Examples are in name only or lacking entirely. **Level 0 (0)** No creditable response.	**8**

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Question	Answer	Marks
4(c)	**'The demographic transition model (DTM) is a useful way to understand population change over time.'** **With the aid of examples, how far do you agree with this statement?** Candidates might consider how useful it has been and how it may or may not be useful in a modern world, or from the perspective of countries currently at different stages of population change. As a model it may be useful as: • A universal concept that can be applied to all countries in the world • Acts as a starting point for the study of demographic change over time • An assessment of a country's current population growth based on its placement within one of five stages • The timescale of each stage is flexible • Indicates the relationship between birth rate and death rate – easy to understand and simple to interpret • Useful for addressing economic and social policies within a country and across countries • Comparisons can be made demographically between countries Limitations could include: • The original model did not include the fifth stage (decline) as this was not noted until the 1960s in some Western European countries • Outliers and exceptions to the rule • DTM cannot reveal the impact of variables such as migration • Does not predict how long a country will be in each stage • It is based on Europe (Eurocentric) and presumed that all countries will follow the sequence of socio-economic changes e.g. many LICs started with higher BR/DRs than HICs • It does not include the role played by governments through population policies • Does not include events such as natural disasters, conflict, pandemics • Does not account for new technologies – e.g. technology/healthcare has evolved, so in LICs/MICs there is a much steeper fall in death rates than experienced in HICs 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 the demographic transition model (DTM) is a useful way to understand population change over time. Examples used are appropriate and integrated effectively into the response. Response is well founded in detailed knowledge and strong conceptual understanding of the topic.	**15**

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Question	Answer	Marks
	Level 3 (8–11) Response assesses the extent to which the demographic transition model (DTM) is a useful way to understand population change over time 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 the demographic transition model (DTM) is a useful way to understand population change over time. 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 the demographic transition model (DTM) 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.	

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Migration/Settlement dynamics

Question	Answer	Marks
5(a)(i)	**Define the term 'voluntary migration'.** Movement of a person **(1)** by their own choice **(1)** for a period of at least 1 year/permanently **(1)**.	**3**
5(a)(ii)	**Explain <u>two</u> constraints on voluntary migration.** A constraint limits or restricts movement, slowing migration, but not stopping it. Constraints on voluntary migration could include: • Cost • Access to transport • Distance • Dangers of the journey • Government controls on internal migration (e.g. rural–urban in China) • Entry conditions such as visas, points systems, quotas etc. • Family responsibilities • Age • Other For each factor: **1 mark** for a simple point, **2 marks** for a developed point (with detail or an example).	**4**
5(b)	**With the aid of examples, explain the pull factors of urban areas in LICs/MICs.** Candidates may consider economic, social, environmental or political pull factors of urban areas. These could include: • More jobs/wider variety of jobs • Higher wages • Better living conditions such as infrastructure and basic services • Access to education • Availability of healthcare services • Availability of affordable housing • Good transport networks • Increased security / increased freedom from cultural restrictions/societal norms • Networks of friends/families – chain migration • Other **Max. 4 marks** if no valid examples or a generic response without reference to the LICs/MICs context. Award marks based on the quality of explanation and breadth of the response using the marking levels below.	**8**

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Question	Answer	Marks
5(b)	**Level 3 (6–8)** Response clearly explains the pull factors of urban areas in LICs/MICs. 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 pull factors of urban areas in LICs/MICs. 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 of the pull factors of urban areas. Knowledge is basic and understanding may be inaccurate. Examples are in name only or lacking entirely. **Level 0 (0)** No creditable response.	
5(c)	**With the aid of examples, assess the extent to which rural to urban migration in LICs/MICs causes problems in <u>rural</u> areas.** Problems in the rural areas could include: • Loss of workforce / lower productivity • Decline of agriculture • Population structure upset by loss of young people • Families are split up • The elderly remain and the death rate in the community may increase • Neglect of rural areas • Less people to support services • Families more vulnerable as males leave • Other Benefits to the rural areas (counterarguments) could include: • Fewer people to feed • More land per person • More resources per person • Remittances may be sent home by migrants – of long-term benefit • Less underemployment • Wage rates may rise • Lack of males could empower women/promote upskilling • Other Candidates may evaluate by considering changes over time, between places, number of migrants, governance of the area migrants move to.	**15**

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Question	Answer	Marks
5(c)	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 rural to urban migration in LICs/MICs causes problems in rural areas. 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 rural to urban migration in LICs/MICs causes problems in rural areas 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 rural to urban migration in LICs/MICs causes problems in rural areas. 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 rural to urban migration or problems in rural areas 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.	

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Settlement dynamics

Question	Answer	Marks
6(a)	**Describe the changes in location of retailing in urban areas.** Changes could be for any part of urban areas and will vary according to the examples used. Changes in location could include: • Linear developments • Movement out of centre into retail parks/rural-urban fringe / decentralised • Shopping malls • Railway stations • Growth or decline of CBDs • Movement online results in vacant premises • Other **1 mark** for a simple description, **2 marks** for a developed description (such as detail or an example) up to the maximum.	**7**
6(b)	**With the aid of examples, explain the role of planning in the location of manufacturing industries in urban areas.** Candidates should demonstrate knowledge of the role of planning and links to the location of manufacturing industries in urban areas. The role of government may vary from planned economies to more laissez-faire policies. Ideas could include: • Separation of manufacturing from other land uses e.g. residential • Infrastructure projects (power/transport) • Set standards for environmental impacts and encourage the use of modern technology to reduce impacts • Industrial estates • Discourage central locations (space used, air/noise pollution) by increasing rents and restricting land use • Encourage investment • Redevelopment of older industrial areas for residential and hospitality to encourage tourism/regenerate the area **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 role of planning in the location of manufacturing industries in urban areas. Response is well founded in detailed knowledge and strong conceptual understanding of the topic. Examples used are appropriate and integrated effectively into the response.	**8**

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Question	Answer	Marks
6(b)	**Level 2 (3–5)** Response explains the role of planning in the location of manufacturing industries in urban areas. 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 of either planning or the location of manufacturing industries in urban areas. Knowledge is basic and understanding may be inaccurate. Examples are in name only or lacking entirely. **Level 0 (0)** No creditable response.	
6(c)	**'Population size is the most important factor in defining a world city.'** **With the aid of examples, how far do you agree with this statement?** A world city can be defined using a range of criteria and characteristics such as: • Population size • Important hubs for the global economy • Significant in the worldwide flow of capital, stock exchange • Concentration of advanced producer services (accountancy, advertising, banking/finance, law) • Number of TNC headquarters and their size and economic performance • Connectivity – alpha cities are primary nodes in the global economic network • Physical transport infrastructure and internet communications • Political influence e.g. UN offices, hosting climate conferences • Cultural/historical importance – universities, museums, landmark buildings • A composite indicator including scores on business activity, human capital, information exchange, cultural experience and political engagement • Innovation and creativity • Quality of life measures • Diversity of cultures/groups 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 population size is the most important factor in defining a world city. Examples used are appropriate and integrated effectively into the response. Response is well founded in detailed knowledge and strong conceptual understanding of the topic.	**15**

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Question	Answer	Marks
6(c)	**Level 3 (8–11)** Response assesses the extent to which population size is the most important factor in defining a world city 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 population size is the most important factor in defining a world city. 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 world cities 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.	

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