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CAMBRIDGE
International Education

Cambridge International AS & A Level

GEOGRAPHY **9696/23**

Paper 2 Core Human Geography **May/June 2026**

MARK SCHEME

Maximum Mark: 60

Published

This mark scheme contains the instructions and marking guidance that our examiners used to mark candidate responses for this component.

Before they start marking, examiners complete a standardisation process. They review a range of candidate responses and discuss the mark scheme in detail to agree which answers can and cannot be accepted. Examiners award marks where it is clear that candidate responses have met the requirements of the mark scheme. These requirements may vary between different components or different versions of the same component, depending on the exact requirements of the question and the candidate responses seen during the standardisation process.

Sometimes, our mark schemes may allow marks to be awarded to responses which contain elements that are factually incorrect or for content not covered by the syllabus. We do this in response to the demands of a specific question to support candidates and make sure that our assessments are fair. However, these allowances should not be used as a guide for teaching and learning.

We cannot discuss the mark scheme with schools, and we recommend that schools read the mark scheme together with the assessment material and the Principal Examiner Report for Teachers.

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General marking principles

All examiners must apply these marking principles when marking candidate responses.

1	Examiners must award marks for each response in line with: • the specific **content** defined in the mark scheme • the specific **skills** defined in the mark scheme or in the level descriptions • the **standard of response** required as exemplified by the standardisation scripts.
2	Examiners must award **whole marks** (not half marks, or other fractions).
3	Examiners must award marks **positively**. This means that: • marks are not deducted for errors or omissions • marks are awarded for correct/valid answers as defined in the mark scheme and also for **other valid answers** which go beyond the scope of the syllabus and mark scheme referring to your team leader as appropriate • the quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar are judged **only** when the mark scheme indicates that these features are **specifically assessed** in the question. However, the meaning of all responses must be unambiguous.
4	Examiners must **consistently** apply the requirements of the mark scheme and any rules for what to do when candidates have not followed instructions correctly.
5	Examiners must use the **full range of marks** defined in the mark scheme, unless limited by the quality of the candidate responses seen.
6	Examiners must award marks according to the mark scheme and **must not** award marks with grade thresholds or grade descriptions 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)
	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

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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)	**Figure 1.1 shows average daily calorie consumption per capita for Oceania, Asia and Africa, 1961–2020.** **Compare the changes in the average daily calorie consumption per capita for Oceania, Asia and Africa shown in Figure 1.1.** Ideas such as: • All increase overall, though Oceania less significantly so (just increases by 100 kcal)/Asia and Africa increase more rapidly • The overall increase is greatest in Asia (1850 to 2900 kcal) • Oceania is always significantly higher than Asia and Africa • Asia overtakes Africa in 1978/1982 • Asia and Africa have similar trends overall from ~1982 but Africa remains static (similar to Oceania) from 2010 whereas Asia continues to increase • All fluctuate/reference to fluctuations **1 mark** for each comparative point. **Reserve 1 mark** for use of data.	**4**
1(b)	**Suggest <u>two</u> problems for countries caused by increased calorie consumption per capita.** • Increased obesity/health issues e.g. heart disease, diabetes • Increased pressure on healthcare services/increased costs • Issues linked to poor health – fall in life expectancy, declining economic productivity • Imports necessary to provide enough food • Increased pressure on the environment e.g. increased animal populations producing more methane (global warming), increased land under cultivation leading to loss of habitats/land degradation. • Potential food shortage **1 mark** per valid point.	**2**

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Question	Answer	Marks
1(c)	**Explain the possible impacts of climate change on food security.** Food security exists when everyone has physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and preferences. It is a critical global priority that balances agricultural production, supply chain stability, and fair economic access. Impacts could include: • Decreased food security • Decrease in yields • More areas too hot/wet/dry to produce food • Rising sea levels reduce land area for farming • Increased risk of disease/pests reducing food production • Change in type of foodstuffs/crops/animals farmed • More intense weather hazards leading to local/regional food shortages e.g. floods, storms, droughts • Greater inequality of food supply as prices rise • Disrupted food supply chains/storage due to hazards • Could increase security in some areas – new areas of crops may increase local supply in some areas Credit a simple reason for **1 mark** or a point with development (such as detail or an example) for **2 marks**.	**4**

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Migration/Settlement dynamics

Question	Answer	Marks
2(a)	**Table 2.1 shows the main sources of migrants to the USA from countries in Central and South America in 2021.** **Using the data in Table 2.1, identify the country with the greatest number of migrants to the USA relative to its total population. Explain your answer.** Honduras **(1)** Justification: Honduras has the second largest number of migrants but the second smallest population **(1)** valid reference to data to support comparison **(1)** or 3.3% **(1)** of the second smallest population/10.3 million migrated **(1)** or A larger percentage than any other country **(1)**, the others are 2% or below **(1)** (M 0.6%, H 3.3%, G 1.8%, ES 1.9%, E 0.6%, B 0.03%)	**3**
2(b)	**Suggest why there were more migrants from Mexico than migrants from Brazil.** Reasons could include: • Distance – Brazil is much further away (distance decay)/shorter easier journey for Mexicans • Journey likely to be cheaper from Mexico • Likely to be air journey for Brazilians – therefore legal, which also increases costs (visa) • More intervening opportunities for Brazilians as they move north • Mexicans have better knowledge/family links in USA compared to Brazilians (chain migration) • Language/culture/labour organisation is established for Mexican migrants in USA • Mexican economy has fewer opportunities than Brazilian economy • More pushes in Mexico e.g. drug wars, poverty, poor food security • Mexico has long (porous) border with USA, Brazil not so. Note: understanding place location is not a requirement for achieving marks, credit valid suggestions of push/pull/intervening factors. Credit a simple reason for **1 mark** or a point with development (such as detail or an example) for **2 marks**.	**3**

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Question	Answer	Marks
2(c)	**Suggest why young adult males may migrate internationally.** Reasons could include: • Less family ties (unmarried/childless) • More drive and ambition as young • Fitter and healthier so can travel/do manual labour/risky jobs • More employment opportunities /better pay for this group • Tradition/culture – men expected to support family, would send remittances, more acceptable for men to travel independently • males more likely to be educated in some cultures • escaping violence/persecution or conscription • less risk averse compared to other groups (e.g. older adults) • other valid reasons for international migration. Credit a simple reason for **1 mark** or a point with development (such as detail or an example) for **2 marks**.	**4**

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Settlement dynamics

Question	Answer	Marks
3(a)	**Figure 3.1 shows a settlement in a rural area in an HIC in Europe.** **Identify <u>two</u> pieces of evidence that the rural settlement shown in Figure 3.1 has a declining population.** Evidence could include: • Derelict buildings • Only a few modernised buildings • Areas look overgrown/trees growing over/between buildings • Nearly all roads/paths appear to be tracks/only one tarmacked road • Only a small area of farmland/orchard looks cared for • No services evident except a church **1 mark** per relevant point drawn from Fig. 3.1.	**2**
3(b)	**Using Figure 3.1, suggest why this settlement has a declining population.** Suggestions could include: • Appears to be remote/limited access/poor quality of roads • Lacks/very limited services • Poor quality housing – expensive to upgrade • Poor farmland/decline in farming incomes • Limited economic opportunities – perhaps only reliance on seasonal tourism • Mountainous terrain makes building difficult/expensive **1 mark** per relevant point, **2 marks** for a point with development (such as detailed reasoning).	**3**
3(c)	**Suggest ways in which rural settlement decline can be reversed.** Methods could include: • Increased farm subsidies/grants, encourage diversification • Improved transport links/accessibility • Government policy • Increased tourism/second homes • Investment in infrastructure e.g. cell phone network so people can work from home • Improved/affordable housing • More people retiring to rural areas for peace/nature etc. • Overseas recruitment/refugee settlement • Provide services e.g. shops/health/education Credit a simple explanation for **1 mark** or an explanation with development (such as detail or an example) for **2 marks**.	**5**

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Section B

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

Population

Question	Answer	Marks
4(a)	**Compare the population characteristics of a youthful population with the population characteristics of an ageing population.** Responses may include well labelled age/sex pyramids. Differences could include: • Age • Sex – ageing has more elderly females • BR/DR • Employment levels/income – more retired in ageing population • Future increase in adult/working population % vs decrease • Mobility – young are more mobile • Health Similarities include: • Working age • Dependency ratio could be the same • Generally same decline through age groups • Both have similar issues for governments to manage e.g. need for healthcare **Max. 4 marks** if no comparison Credit a simple comparative point for **1 mark** or with development (such as detail or an example) for **2 marks**.	**7**

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Question	Answer	Marks
4(b)	**With the aid of examples, explain why death rates are declining in many LICs and MICs.** Reasons could include: • Lower infant mortality • Better health care/medicines/vaccinations • Healthier diets/fewer famines • Higher levels of education (less manual work, laws against child labour etc.) • Improved sanitation/water supply/food security etc. • Greater number living in urban areas (more access to services etc.) • Greater security • Government investments to improve standards of living, public health campaigns etc. Award marks based on the quality of explanation and breadth of the response using the marking levels below. **Max. 4 marks** if no valid examples. **Level 3 (6–8)** Response clearly explains why death rates are declining in many 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 why death rates are declining in many LICs/MICs. Death rates in urban areas are higher than in rural areas in HICs. Response develops on a largely secure base of knowledge and understanding. Examples may lack detail or development. **Level 1 (1–2)** Response describes why death rates are declining in LICs/MICs. 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)	**With the aid of examples, evaluate the use of the demographic transition model (DTM) in predicting future population change.** Limitations of the DTM include: • Based on western Europe's historical process • DR fallen more rapidly with recent economic development as improvements applied immediately • Cultures/beliefs differ e.g. about contraception/value of children • Doesn't allow for disasters/wars/climate change • Link between DR and BR may be different • Different political climate – role of the state is peripheral in the model, yet many countries have attempted to manipulate BRs • Does not really consider migration However • It does seem to work in many countries as economies improve • It does suggest ways of influencing population change • It is only a model/suggestion • Stage 5 has been introduced to update the model (will there be a future need for a stage 6?) Candidates may conclude it can be a useful tool when applied with caution and can have some value in predicting future population change. Award marks based on the quality of the response using the marking levels below. **Level 4 (12–15)** Response thoroughly assesses the relevance of the Demographic Transition Model (DTM) in predicting future population change. 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 relevance of the Demographic Transition Model (DTM) in predicting future population change. 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 Demographic Transition Model (DTM) in predicting future population change. 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 relevance of 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.	**15**

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Question	Answer	Marks
4(c)	**Level 0 (0)** No creditable response.	

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Migration

Question	Answer	Marks
5(a)(i)	**Define the term 'chain migration'.** Chain migration is when prospective migrants learn of opportunities **(1)** are provided with transportation and have initial accommodation and employment **(1)** arranged by means of primary social relationships with previous migrants **(1)** or A process whereby existing/pioneering immigrants **(1)** encourage or enable members of their family or community **(1)** to relocate to the same country or region **(1)** or Migrants are helped by friends/relatives who will feedback their experiences **(1)** migrant facilitates/encourages family members to join them in their new location **(1)** thus forming a chain **(1)** A simple statement such as 'one migrant follows another' award **1 mark** only.	**3**
5(a)(ii)	**Suggest the benefits of chain migration for migrants.** Benefits of chain migration for migrants may include: • Reduces fear of the unknown/increases security • Reduces costs of migration, especially setting up costs on arrival • Provides information to better inform decisions • Maintains family/friends links • Keep within known culture/cultural practices can be maintained e.g. religious festivals • Employment is more likely due to personal recommendation • Will be less dependent on government/official help • May help integration into society Credit a simple point for **1 mark** or with development (such as detail or an example) for **2 marks**.	**4**

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Question	Answer	Marks
5(b)	**With the aid of examples, explain the impacts of intra-urban migration (within urban settlements) on urban areas.** The impacts of intra-urban migration will depend upon the nature of the movement and the urban area itself. The movements are usually driven by changes in peoples' circumstances (lifecycle as well as economic changes) and perceptions of their neighbourhoods. Impacts may be: • Economic e.g. property prices, employment, costs etc. • Social e.g. cultural, levels of education, formation of social groupings, gentrification leading to change • Demographic e.g. age, ethnicity, sex ratio, BR/DR etc. • Political e.g. voter patterns, security, tax base, service provision (e.g. schools) • Environmental e.g. pollution levels linked to congestion Creation of segregated areas e.g. older people, professional high incomes – impacts on patterns of land use/housing types, redevelopment projects. A lot will depend on the type of intra-urban movement e.g. outwards to suburban locations, inward to CBD fringe etc. Answers may refer to LICs. MICs or HICs. Award marks based on the quality of explanation and breadth of the response using the marking levels below. **Max. 4 marks** if no valid examples. **Level 3 (6–8)** Response clearly explains the impacts of intra-urban movements. Response is well founded in detailed knowledge and strong conceptual understanding of the topic. Any examples used are appropriate and integrated effectively into the response. **Level 2 (3–5)** Response explains the impacts of intra-urban movements. Response develops on a largely secure base of knowledge and understanding. Examples may lack detail or development. **Level 1 (1–2)** Response describes the impacts of intra-urban movements. 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
5(c)	**'Increased rates of international migration are due to climate change.'** **With the aid of examples, how far do you agree with this statement?** Climate change may increase international migration as: • Extreme weather events (floods, storms, wildfires) • Areas become flooded e.g. by rising sea level • Changes to weather patterns – droughts, heat waves mean people cannot live/farm in certain areas • Increased outbreaks of disease, pests force people to move But also there is more voluntary international migration as: • Improved transport/communications • Higher levels of education/ambition • More economic migration (push & pull) • Increased chain migration (self-reinforcing cycle) And more forced migration due to: • Conflicts • Political persecution Some candidates may recognise that it is not easy to separate all these factors – many interact. For example, climate change may be a 'hidden' reason, such as by reducing food security which leads to civil unrest. Some migration due to climate change is likely to be internal rather than international. Award marks based on the quality of the response using the marking levels below. **Level 4 (12–15)** Response thoroughly assesses whether increased rates of international migration are due to increased climate change. 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 whether increased rates of international migration are due to increased climate change. 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 whether increased rates of international migration are influenced by climate change. 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**

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Question	Answer	Marks
5(c)	**Level 1 (1–3)** Response outlines causes of international 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.	

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Settlement dynamics

Question	Answer	Marks
6(a)	**Explain why some retailing is moving out of central business districts (CBDs).** Movement may include: • to urban fringe/out-of-town • shopping malls • online Push of: • High rents/rates • No room to expand • Competition • Traffic congestion, poor air quality • High cost of services • Declining numbers of customers • Limited parking for customers Pull of: • Cheaper land/rents etc. • More room for expansion/parking etc. • Near to customers/easier access • Environmental reasons – increased pollution/air quality issues increased congestion in inner areas and on inner city roads. • Economic reasons – cheaper land modern planning of the retail site/parking provision, indoor shopping experience (e.g. aircon) in malls, change of shopping image changes in accessibility with ring roads, motorway location/hubs • Social reasons – changes in local population, demand outward movement of people the post covid fashion of WFH and the associated loss of support/service jobs, e.g. cafes • Rise of internet shopping no or little High Street presence • Political reasons – government policies, pollution laws, congestion charges/ULEZ zones Credit a simple description for **1 mark** or a description with development (such as detail or an example) for **2 marks**, to the maximum.	**7**

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Question	Answer	Marks
6(b)	**With the aid of examples, explain the causes of residential segregation.** The syllabus refers to income and race/ethnicity. Residential segregation is largely caused by ability to pay, government planning/intervention or cultural/ethnic preferences. For example, an urban area will have sections that are the high income housing, chosen due to favourable outlooks/access to green spaces etc. Only the people that can afford to will live there, so it becomes a segregated area along the lines of ability to pay. People can also choose to segregate themselves in areas so they can access shared cultural facilities, such as places of worship, food shops and clothing stores. Other factors include: • Operation of the housing market • Influence of family/friends • Culture • Planning Also candidates could refer to: • Historical factors • Inertia • Land use zoning • Physical factors e.g. views, prone to flooding etc • Environmental e.g. near parks/coast etc • Migration – chain migration e.g. development of Chinatowns, intra-urban Award marks based on the quality of explanation and breadth of the response using the marking levels below. **Max. 4 marks** if no valid examples. **Level 3 (6–8)** Response clearly explains the causes of residential segregation. Response is well founded in detailed knowledge and strong conceptual understanding of the topic. Any examples used are appropriate and integrated effectively into the response. **Level 2 (3–5)** Response explains the causes of residential segregation. Response develops on a largely secure base of knowledge and understanding. Examples may lack detail or development. **Level 1 (1–2)** Response describes the causes of residential segregation. 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
6(c)	**'The growth of shanty towns (squatter settlements) in LICs/MICs is caused by ineffective management.'** **With the aid of examples, how far do you agree with this statement?** Management may be considered at local or national level. It could also be personal rather than at local/government level – e.g. people do not plan ahead sufficiently to manage their move so end up in sub-optimal locations. For: • Lack of planning/management of conditions/location of shanty towns • poor financial management • little attempt to control or manage in flow of population/few efforts to improve rural areas • little provision of services etc. But the growth of shanty towns may not be about management. They reflect large scale (and often continuous) rural-urban migration which can be viewed as a positive. The settlements are a low-income and more flexible way of finding housing. It could be a stage cities go through as part of urbanisation. LICs are unlikely to have funds to provide sufficient accommodation for all the rural-urban migrants. Shanty towns can become well-established communities over time and so do not need to be managed. Sometimes, attempts to help/manage these settlements is rejected by residents and this suggests that managing these types of urban phenomena is not always in the best interests of either the local government or the residents themselves. 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 growth of shanty towns in LICs/MICs is caused by ineffective management. 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 the growth of shanty towns in LICs/MICs is caused by ineffective management. 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 whether the growth of shanty towns in LICs/MICs is caused by ineffective management. 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**

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Question	Answer	Marks
6(c)	**Level 1 (1–3)** Response outlines causes of the growth of shanty towns 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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