

**GCSE (9-1)**

**Examiners' report**

# **GEOGRAPHY B**

## **(GEOGRAPHY FOR ENQUIRING MINDS)**

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**J384**

For first teaching in 2016

**J384/03 Summer 2023 series**

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## Introduction

Our examiners' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on candidates' performance in the examinations. They provide useful guidance for future candidates.

The reports will include a general commentary on candidates' performance, identify technical aspects examined in the questions and highlight good performance and where performance could be improved. A selection of candidate answers is also provided. The reports will also explain aspects which caused difficulty and why the difficulties arose, whether through a lack of knowledge, poor examination technique, or any other identifiable and explainable reason.

Where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report.

A full copy of the question paper and the mark scheme can be downloaded from OCR.

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## Paper 3 series overview

J384/03 'Geographical Exploration' is one of three examinations contributing to the GCSE 'Geography for Enquiring Minds'. The examination is designed to give candidates the opportunity to demonstrate their geographical understanding and apply their understanding and skills to unseen scenarios within one location. This examination draws on both Our Natural World 01 and People and Society 02. In 2023 the questions on this examination paper were focused on Mexico City and linked to three units within the specification: Dynamic Development, Resource Reliance and Global Hazards.

To be successful with this Geographical Exploration examination candidates needed to be able to demonstrate that they can 'think like a geographer'. Most candidates showed a good level of preparation for this exam and demonstrated confidence in taking information from the resource booklet in order to develop their responses. The resource booklet was well used, with many candidates demonstrating the ability to link together information from several sources to justify their answers. Most candidates were confident with the key concepts assessed and the key geographical terminology used in the questions. Candidates who responded most successfully were able to select an appropriate idea and develop it extensively using the resources as evidence to support their ideas.

The paper was completed by almost all candidates; no candidates appeared to have run out of time. The standard of handwriting and the legibility of papers remains a challenge for examiners, but candidate's SPaG was generally good. The paper was both challenging and differentiated, allowing access to achieve for all candidates.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• developed their extended responses using links to the resources and their wider understanding</li> <li>• were able to interpret climate graphs</li> <li>• demonstrated good mathematical skills and understanding</li> <li>• responded to the keywords and command words in the higher mark questions</li> <li>• demonstrated competent skills of written communication.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• quoted text or data from the resources but did not develop their response</li> <li>• misinterpreted the temperature and precipitation data from the climate graph</li> <li>• did not attempt numerical or statistical questions</li> <li>• responded with simple statements focussing on one source from the resource booklet</li> <li>• were unable to identify links between a number of sources of information.</li> </ul>

### Question 1 (a)

1 (a) Look at **Fig. 1** in the Resource Booklet, which shows a map of Mexico.

Describe the location of Mexico City.

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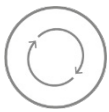
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..... [2]

Many candidates were able to accurately describe the location of Mexico City using compass directions and/or distances from other named locations. Candidates who were less successful used phrases such as; near to, above, below, in the middle of or in between, these were not given marks. Most successful candidates referenced the location within Mexico and then quoted a direct distance and/or direction from either Acapulco or Guadalajara. Compass directions from large bodies of water or adjacent countries were not given marks as they were not specific enough to fix the location of Mexico City.

### Assessment for learning



Accurately describing the location of a city or country or the distribution of cities or countries on a global scale is a commonly asked question in geography examinations. Candidates must learn to describe using geographical terms such as compass directions and interpret the scale of the map to accurately reflect distances.

### Question 1 (b) (i)

(b) Look at **Fig. 2** in the Resource Booklet, which shows development statistics for Mexico and the UK, 2020.

(i) Calculate the **difference** in total population between Mexico and the UK.

..... millions [1]

Almost all candidates correctly answered this calculation question.

### Question 1 (b) (ii)

(ii) What is the **ratio** of internet users to non internet users in Mexico?

..... [1]

Many candidates selected the correct percentage for internet use in Mexico from the resource (66.6%). Candidates recognised this was a percentage and so subtracted it from 100 and reached a non-internet user figure of 33.4%, as it is not possible to simplify these figures, many candidates quoted 66.6:33.4 as their ratio, this was given marks. Some candidates recognised that 66.6% was probably reflective of 66.666 recurring and therefore identified the non-internet users as 33.3%. This ratio was then simplified to 2:1 and given marks.

### Question 1 (b) (iii)

(iii) Using **Fig. 2**, identify and explain **two** ways in which Mexico's development statistics are typical of an EDC.

1 .....

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2 .....

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[4]

Most candidates correctly identified one of the five development statistics which were relevant in this context; GNI per capita, life expectancy, internet users, literacy rate or fertility rate. 'Population' and 'Population of capital cities' were not given marks as development indicators. Most successful candidates described why the data was typical of an EDC by comparing to either an LIDC, AC or specifically the UK data from the resource. There were no marks given to candidates who simply quoted Mexico's development statistics. Many candidates were able to develop their response by explaining a socioeconomic factor which would link to the development data they had chosen. Most common answers were ideas relating to improving education, medical care, trade and access to technology, these were all given marks.

### Question 1 (c)

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..... [4]

Some candidates were able to accurately describe the annual pattern of precipitation through selecting changes (increase/decrease) between named months, identifying the wettest and driest months and quoting data from the bar chart. Most typically candidates started their description in January and worked through to December, providing their description was accurate this also gained them a communication mark for a logical description. Some candidates chose to describe the pattern by referring to the seasons; as Mexico City is in the Northern hemisphere, 19 degrees north of the equator, candidates were given marks for referencing winter/summer months.

Many candidates incorrectly described the annual pattern of precipitation by referring to the line graph (temperature). Some of these candidates correctly identified broad patterns which reflected the precipitation pattern and therefore achieved 1 or 2 marks. Candidates were not given the communication mark as their description was not appropriate to the question.

#### Misconception



Precipitation is always plotted on a climate graph with a bar chart. Temperature is always plotted on a climate graph with a line graph.

### Question 1 (d)

- (d) Look at **Fig. 4** in the Resource Booklet, which shows a water resource fact file for Mexico City.

Using **Figs. 3 and 4**, analyse the issues people in Mexico City may face with water supply.

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..... [6]

Some candidates were able to extract relevant information from either Fig. 3 or Fig. 4 and describe issues associated with water supply in Mexico City, a significant number of candidates quoted phrases from Fig. 4 and linked them together in sentences without analysing how these issues linked to the water supply for people living in Mexico City, these candidates were given marks at Level 1. Other candidates developed their reasoning and analysed the likely impacts of the issues highlighted in Fig. 4, extending their interpretation to describe knock-on effects of leaking pipes and sewage problems, many of these candidates were given marks at Level 2, depending on the extent of their development. Some candidates were able to refer to both Fig. 3 and Fig. 4, linking months of minimum rainfall with diminished underground water reserves and suggesting the impact that would have on the densely populated city in conjunction with the issues previously mentioned, these candidates were given marks at Level 3.

Exemplar 1

Sewerage and water pipes often burst as they are old and not regularly maintained. This can lead to a big water problem in the city, because there will not be enough supply to meet the demands. If there is a water shortage, it could lead to healthcare problems and dehydration. This puts excessive pressure on healthcare services, and therefore increases waiting and appointment times. This could lead to more deaths in Mexico, and therefore limits its development.

In this exemplar extract, the candidate develops their reasoning and analyses the likely impacts of the issue of leaking water pipes and sewage problems. The candidate extends their response by describing the plausible knock-on effects on the healthcare system of Mexico City. This entire response was given marks at Level 3.

Question 2 (a) (i)

2 (a) Look at Fig. 5 in the Resource Booklet, which shows a newspaper article about life in Mexico City.

(i) What percentage of Mexico's population earn 21% of the nation's total income?

..... [1]

Almost all candidates achieved 1 mark on this question and correctly extracted '1%' from the text.



Question 2 (a) (ii)

(ii) What risks do the Mexico City Authorities suggest may increase due to climate change?

..... [1]

Most candidates achieved 1 mark on this question and correctly extracted 'landslides and flooding' from the text. The question asked for 'risks', therefore both hazards were needed to gain the mark.

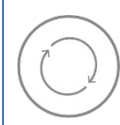
Question 2 (a) (iii)

(iii) Using the photographs in Fig. 5, identify one difference in the environments of Polanco and Neza-Chalco-Itza.

.....  
..... [1]

Many candidates identified a difference in the physical environment, most typically the number of green spaces/trees between Polanco and Neza-Chalco-Itza. Some candidates identified differences in the built-up environment such as the heights of buildings, the construction of buildings or the facilities apparent in both areas, these all gained marks. Other candidates made value judgements about the areas based on their opinions; rich/poor, clean/dirty etc these were not given marks as the question asked for differences in the environments.

Assessment for learning



Accurately identifying features from a photograph is a common question in geography examinations. Candidates need to name something they can actually see in the photograph. This skill could be practiced as a quick learning or recap activity with a series of photographs displayed through a slide presentation.

The two most commonly seen errors which would not be given marks in the examination are; candidates naming something that's missing from the photograph, e.g. 'There are no streetlights' or candidates quoting an opinion not a feature, e.g. 'it's rich'. Candidates should be reminded that when the question asks for one feature, it is the first feature in their response which the examiner will give marks or not to, as appropriate.

### Question 2 (b)

- (b) An **informal settlement** is where housing is constructed on land that the occupants do not own or have the permission to build on.

Explain why **informal settlements** are often found in LIDC and EDC cities.

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..... [3]

Candidates responded well to this question with many candidates gaining 3 marks. Candidates achieving the full 3 marks on this question most commonly developed a line of reasoning to make three valid statements or chose to identify three separate reasons, both approaches were mark worthy. Most candidates began their response focussing on reasons for rural-urban migration, then developed it to describe issues apparent on arriving in an LIDC or EDC city and concluded with the reasons for the construction and growth of informal settlements. Candidates demonstrated increasing proficiency at linking ideas in their explanation resulting in well-structured responses.

### Question 2 (c)\*

**(c)\*** Using **Figs. 2, 3, 4 and 5**, evaluate the contemporary challenges caused by **inequality** within Mexico City.

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..... [12]


Candidates who were most successful evaluated the challenges by comparing the environments and circumstances faced by residents of Polanco and Neza-Chalco-Itza. Some chose to compare each challenge from both perspectives, while other candidates described the Polanco district in its entirety and then drew comparisons by highlighting the challenges in Neza-Chalco-Itza by contrast, both approaches gained marks. Most candidates were able to use the resources to successfully identify the challenges faced by some residents as a result of inequality in Mexico City, responses typically focused on the differences in housing, services, education and employment prospects. Some candidates quoted Mexico's development statistics from Fig. 2 and applied them to Mexico City, this was acceptable. Similarly, some candidates assumed that the challenges of sewage management and water supply outlined in Fig. 4 were more likely to be prevalent in Neza-Chalco-Itza rather than Polanco.

Less successful responses directly quoted inequalities based on the text from Fig. 5 only, without developing reasoning to explain the contemporary challenges, these were marked at Level 1.

Exemplar 2

den small, dirty markets. Furthermore, Neza Chalco Itza residents ~~at~~ live ~~o~~ in extremely small properties with little space which increases disease due to the unhygienic conditions and ~~is~~ perfect conditions for pathogens to spread. This combined with poor sewage<sup>[12]</sup> networks causes inhumane living conditions. This again contrasts to the rich who live in Polanco as they are prioritised in the eyes of the government

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Turn over 

In this exemplar extract the candidate describes the living conditions as one of the challenges faced by occupants of Neza-Chalco-Itza, the line of reasoning is well developed to link evidence from Figs. 4 and 5, with a comparison statement regarding the inequality demonstrated through Polanco and the likely preferential treatment from the authorities. This entire response was marked at Level 3.

Question 3 (a) (i)

3 Look at Fig. 6 in the Resource Booklet, which shows information about Mexico City's risk index, 2015–2025.

(a) (i) Using Fig. 6, calculate the total amount of GDP at risk due to tectonic hazards.

..... US billion dollars (\$) [1]

Most candidates correctly answered this calculation question. Some candidates added all of the natural hazard statistics from Fig. 6 together, rather than selecting the ones which were due to tectonic hazards only, these were not given marks.

### Question 3 (a) (ii)

(ii) Explain how tectonic hazards can be a **risk** to people.

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..... [2]

Almost all candidates were given 2 marks for responding 'buildings collapse and people die'.

### Question 3 (b)

Look at **Fig. 7** in the Resource Booklet, which shows information about Mexico City's tectonic events.

(b) Using **Figs. 6 and 7**, discuss the **consequences** of tectonic hazards for people in Mexico City.

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..... [6]

Some candidates were able to extract relevant information from either Fig. 6 or Fig. 7 and correctly identify some consequences of tectonic hazards. A significant number of candidates quoted phrases from Fig. 7 and linked them together in sentences without discussing how these consequences further impacted people living in Mexico City, these candidates were marked at Level 1. Other candidates developed their reasoning and analysed the likely impacts of the consequences described in Fig. 7, extending their interpretation to describe knock-on effects of damaged buildings and the deaths of residents, many of these candidates were marked at Level 2, depending on the extent of their development. Some candidates were able to refer to both Fig. 6 and Fig. 7, linking impacts on the economy with previous consequences of tectonic hazards (both earthquakes and volcanoes), suggesting the overall and future consequences they would have on the densely populated city, these candidates were marked at Level 3

### Question 4\*

4\* Using the information in the Resource Booklet and your own understanding:

- 1. Evaluate whether the contemporary challenges faced by residents in Mexico City are due to **physical** factors.
- 2. Suggest **one** initiative that could support Mexico City to develop long term sustainability.

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**[12]**

**Spelling, punctuation and grammar and the use of specialist terminology (✎) [3]**

There were some good responses to this question. Most candidates demonstrated effective writing skills through structuring their response by first considering the challenges due to physical factors and then human factors and finally suggesting one initiative to sustainably improve Mexico City. In high scoring responses ideas were thoroughly developed and all aspects of the questions were addressed. Most successful candidates demonstrated an understanding of command words and keywords and offered an explicit evaluation as a conclusion to their response. Many candidates competently referred back to the question, including the vocabulary of the question in their response demonstrating a confidence in this style of question.

Less successful responses tended to rely very heavily on the resources simply quoting factors without evaluating the extent to which they contributed to the challenges faced by Mexico City, some candidates summarised their responses to earlier levelled questions.

Many candidates were able to suggest an initiative to help Mexico City become more sustainable. Most candidates developed ideas around tectonic monitoring, preparedness and response, primarily building earthquake proof housing for the residents of Nezo-Chalco-Itza.

The use of geographical terms and spellings were strong with most candidates being award at least 2 out of the 3 SPaG marks.

## Exemplar 3

and by addressing its main issues, Mexico City could invest in a large water transfer system. Like the North-South water transfer project of China, Mexico could implement large water pipelines to help manage the distribution and demand of clean water. By doing so, it could decrease the risk of disease in some informal settlements such as Neza-Chalco-Itza which, consequently, decreases pressure on healthcare services. As a

In this exemplar extract the candidate describes the likely impact of their initiative to build a water transfer system. The candidate demonstrates an understanding of the appropriateness and potential success of such a scheme and describes how it will contribute to sustainability for Mexico City. This entire response was marked at Level 4.

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