

Sample questions and answers

Part One – short answer questions: 80 marks

Twelve questions given. You are required to answer 10 (but can answer all 12 if you wish). All questions carry equal marks (ie 8 marks).

As with the other questions, you should allow yourself 30 minutes to answer this section. As this gives you just three minutes per question, you are expected to give just brief answers here.

The 12 questions in this section are based on the Core Units of Physical and Regional Geography and on the Skills. Questions on skills predominate, eg a triangular graph on employment structure (2006), a population pyramid (2007), questions on the OS map, and questions on Photograph Interpretation (2006, 2007). Candidates scored highest on this section of the exam in the past two years.

Consider the examples illustrated on the right from the 2007 exam.

Answers:

Q4 – 12/Tokyo/Dhaka/New York

Q6 – C/B/A/Deposition

Q9 – B/D/A/C

Part Two – structured and essay questions

This comprises four sections: Core Unit 1 – Physical; Core Unit 2 – Regional; Electives (answer on one of the two); and Options (answer on one of the four). You must answer one question from each of these sections. Each of the questions carries equal marks (ie 80 x 4 = 320).

All answers here are to be in the form of a Significant Relevant Point (SRP). An SRP is a single piece of factual information to which an examiner will assign a mark weighting as prescribed by the marking scheme. At higher level each SRP equals 2 marks. An SRP could be a relevant diagram or map; it could be two relevant sentences that make a point.

Marks usually are also given for "overall coherence". This term refers to the quality of the answer – how logical is the presentation? Is there a clear flow of thought? Is the answer well structured? And so on.

Core Unit 1 – Patterns and Processes in the Physical Environment

See the example illustrated right, question 2 on plate tectonics.

Answer:

Part A – You were simply expected to identify each of the four features labelled in the map. Each correct answer earned 5 marks for a total of 20 marks.

The examiners were prepared to accept the following answers:

A – Iceland

B – Mid-Atlantic Ridge

C – Passive Plate Boundary

D – Destructive Plate Boundary

The answer to Part B of the question could be as follows.

This section of the question carries 30 marks. It asks for one Irish landform.

This is how you would gain the 30 marks for one landform:

Naming the landform = two marks

Giving an Irish example = two marks

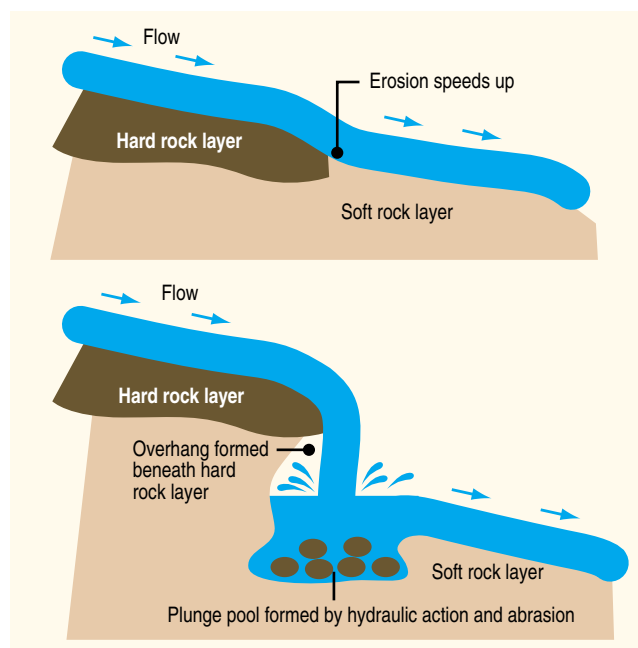
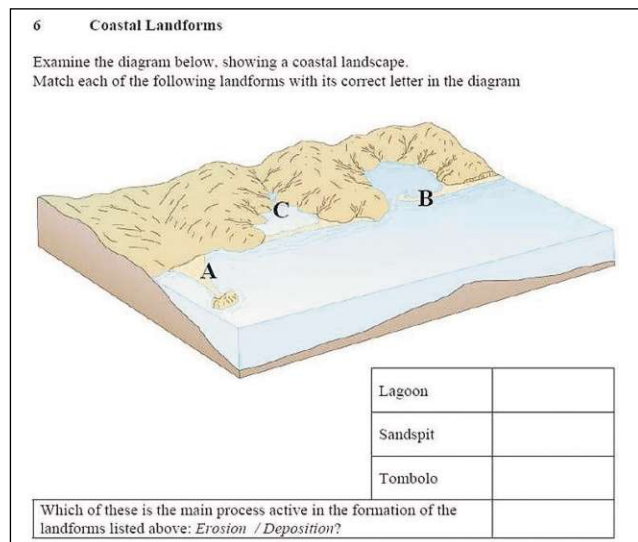
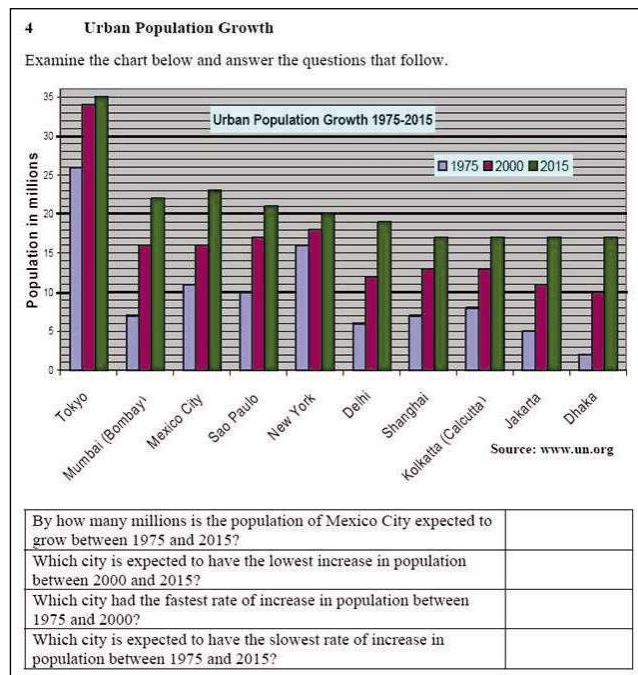
Labelled diagram = four marks graded

Eight SRPs (single piece of factual information) at two marks each

Overall coherence = six marks

Part B – Rivers are significant agents shaping the Irish landscape.

One feature that can be found in a river valley is a waterfall (2 marks for naming the landform), such as the Aasleagh Falls on the Erriff river (two marks for giving an Irish example). Waterfalls are usually found in the upper course of a river (two marks for SRP), the waterfall usually occurs where a bar of hard bedrock lies across the course of the river (two marks for SRP). If this is horizontal, as the river runs off this hard bar of rock on to less resistant rock below, it erodes the softer rock faster by abrasion (two marks for SRP). Abrasion is where the river rolls its load and uses it as a tool (two marks for SRP). Over time an overhang is created as the river cuts into the softer rock (two marks for SRP) and as the water falls directly on to the soft-



er rock below; it forms a plunge pool (two marks for SRP). Eventually the hard rock layer will be undermined and the waterfall will retreat upstream (two marks for SRP). A gorge may develop (two marks for SRP).

This answer would be sufficient to get you full marks, provided you remember to include the labelled diagram that was asked for. If you write too much that is okay. The examiner will correct all your points and mark you for your best ones. The diagram could look something like the one above.

Core Unit 2 – Regional Geography

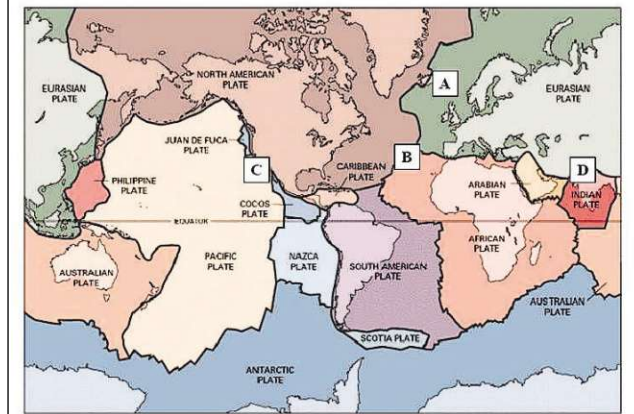
Questions in this section are on Irish regions; non-Irish European regions and Continental/Subcontinental regions.

The questions are reasonable, although some students may have felt that work put in on the Continental/Subcontinental section was not necessarily tested in 2006. For example, two of the three questions, Q4 and Q6 did not require you to refer to your sub-continental region (eg India/Brazil etc). In 2007, however, it was possible to display your Continental/Subcontinental knowledge in all three questions.

A clear understanding of what exactly the term "region"

Question 2

A PLATE TECTONICS



Answer the following questions in your answer book.

- Name the island at A where volcanoes occur.
- Name the feature which can be found at B.
- State clearly the different types of plate boundary found at both C and at D.

[20m]

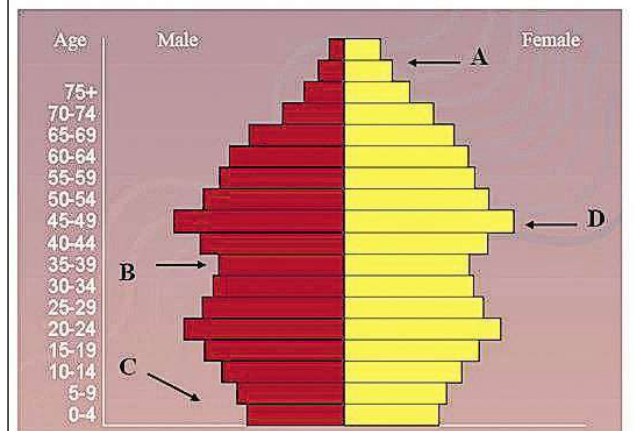
B LANDFORM DEVELOPMENT

With the aid of a labelled diagram, examine the processes that have led to the formation of any one Irish landform of your choice.

[30m]

9 Population Pyramids

Examine the population pyramid below and answer the questions that follow.



Match each of the following descriptions with its correct letter in the population pyramid.

Higher death rate than normal (through war, famine, disease or emigration)	
Period of immigration or baby boom years	
Women live longer than men	
Smaller number of children being born	

means was also examined in the 2007 question on the concept of a region.

Question 5

A – Concept of a region

A region is an area that has one or more characteristics that distinguish it from other areas. Describe the key characteristics of a climatic region or a geomorphological region of your choice (20 marks).

The marking scheme is as follows:

Region named – 4 marks,

Description/explanation – 8 SRPs at 2 marks each.

The answer should read something like this – "A region is an area of land which has certain characteristics that distinguish it from other areas". (You could begin with something like this, although it is not strictly necessary).

I will select a climatic region – the Cool Temperate Maritime Climatic Region (4 marks).

This is found in Western Europe, eg in Ireland and also in Britain, Denmark, Netherlands, Western France etc.

Temperatures: summers are warm; mean temperatures 14-20 degrees Celsius. Winters are cool and mild, it can freeze, but mean is above 0 degrees Celsius.

Precipitation: lots of cloud and precipitation (mainly rain). It falls all through the year but mainly in winter. In Ireland the west receives a lot more rain than the east, due to relief rain caused by mountains in the west.

Winds: strong winds are common in this climate. In the northern hemisphere the southwesterly winds (direction from which they blow) are the prevailing (most common) winds (16 marks).