



Mark Scheme (Results)

January 2026

Pearson Edexcel International Advanced
Level in Geography
Contested Planet
WGE03/01

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General Marking Guidance

- All candidates must receive the same treatment. Examiners must mark the first candidate in exactly the same way as they mark the last.
- Mark schemes should be applied positively. Candidates must be rewarded for what they have shown they can do rather than penalised for omissions.
- Examiners should mark according to the mark scheme not according to their perception of where the grade boundaries may lie.
- There is no ceiling on achievement. All marks on the mark scheme should be used appropriately.
- All the marks on the mark scheme are designed to be awarded. Examiners should always award full marks if deserved, i.e. if the answer matches the mark scheme. Examiners should also be prepared to award zero marks if the candidate's response is not worthy of credit according to the mark scheme.
- Where some judgement is required, mark schemes will provide the principles by which marks will be awarded and exemplification may be limited.
- When examiners are in doubt regarding the application of the mark scheme to a candidate's response, the team leader must be consulted.
- Crossed out work should be marked UNLESS the candidate has replaced it with an alternative response.

Question Number	Using Figure 1, explain the physical processes that caused these social and economic impacts from mid-latitude depressions.
1	AO1 (4 marks)/AO2 (6 marks) Marking instructions Markers must apply the descriptors in line with the general marking guidance and the qualities outlined in the levels-based mark scheme below. Indicative content guidance The indicative content below is not prescriptive and candidates are not required to include all of it. Other relevant material not suggested below must also be credited. Relevant points may include: AO1: • Mid-latitude depressions are low pressure weather systems with associated fronts. • Hazards include strong / storm force winds, heavy frontal rain (flooding), blizzards in winter, and coastal storm surges. • They are continent-scale systems with long tracks (number of countries affected, Figure 1) and can last several days. • Figure 1 suggests some are a major hazard: Kyrill led to 47 deaths (in developed European countries) • Economic losses range from US\$1 to 3.5 billion which is large. AO2: • The billion-dollar economic losses can be explained by property damage due to strong winds (up to 200kmh) especially on exposed coasts and hills, driven by intense low pressure ('bomb' depressions). • Widespread frontal rainfall in depressions leads to flooding, especially in river valleys but also in major cities; farmers suffer crop losses adding to costs. • Some locations (Netherlands, UK coast, Belgium) experience storm surges because of low-pressure approaching the coast and widespread coastal flooding leading to damaged defences, property losses and deaths. • Blizzards and avalanches are possible hazards in some locations (Sweden, Alps (Germany, France, Italy)). • Social impacts (deaths, injury, homelessness) often result from flash-floods or coastal flooding, as well as downed debris striking

		people e.g. trees / walls; some might comment that these death tolls are quite small compared to hurricanes. The number of countries affected (6 or 7) suggest depressions have widespread, cumulative impacts as they track over Europe, so the damages / losses mount up over a period of days.
Level	Mark	Descriptor
Level 0	0	No acceptable response.
Level 1	1–4	- Demonstrates isolated or generic elements of geographical knowledge and understanding, some of which may be inaccurate or irrelevant. (AO1) - Applies knowledge and understanding to geographical information inconsistently. Connections/relationships between stimulus material and the question may be irrelevant. (AO2) - Applies knowledge and understanding of geographical information/ideas to produce an interpretation with limited relevance and/or support. (AO2)
Level 2	5-7	- Demonstrates geographical knowledge and understanding, which is mostly relevant and may include some inaccuracies. (AO1) - Applies knowledge and understanding to geographical information to find some relevant connections/relationships between stimulus material and the question. (AO2) - Applies knowledge and understanding of geographical information/ideas to produce a partial but coherent interpretation that is mostly relevant and supported by evidence. (AO2)
Level 3	8-10	- Demonstrates accurate and relevant geographical knowledge and understanding throughout. (AO1) - Applies knowledge and understanding to geographical information logically to find fully relevant connections/relationships between stimulus material and the question. (AO2) - Applies knowledge and understanding of geographical information/ideas to produce a full and coherent interpretation that is relevant and supported by evidence. (AO2)

Question Number	Using Figure 2, suggest physical and human reasons for the high level of biodiversity in these countries. Indicative content
2(a)	AO1 (4 marks)/AO2 (6 marks) Marking instructions Markers must apply the descriptors in line with the general marking guidance and the qualities outlined in the levels-based mark scheme below. Indicative content guidance The indicative content below is not prescriptive and candidates are not required to include all of it. Other relevant material not suggested below must also be credited. Relevant points may include: AO1: • Biodiversity is a measure of species, genetic or ecosystem diversity (Figure 2 states it is species in this case) • Figure 2 shows the 16 countries with the highest biodiversity: Brazil and Indonesia are especially high. • Biodiversity is influenced by climate and other physical factors, but human factors have modified the natural pattern. • The countries shown on Figure 2 cluster along the Equator and tropics. AO2: • Lack of climate limiting factors (heat, sunlight, precipitation/ water) is a key physical reason, which explains why equatorial countries have highest biodiversity (Amazonia, DRC, SE Asian rainforest); growth and reproduction and continuous and energy flow / nutrient cycling happens rapidly in equatorial climates. • Isolation and islandisation (Indonesia, Australia) can help explain why some places have high biodiversity as a result of evolution producing numerous unique species. • Locations such as Amazonia, DRC and Australia have had stable climates for millions of years allowing species to slowly evolve increasing biodiversity – in addition these places remained largely untouched by industry / urbanisation until relatively recently. • Elsewhere, modern humans have degraded biodiversity e.g. in Europe.

		- Many of the top 10 countries are very large (Brazil, China, Indonesia) and this could explain high biodiversity, whereas others (China, India, USA) have a very diverse range of physical environments, so biodiversity is high e.g. altitudinal zonation. - Numerous human factors (deforestation, pollution, over-hunting) have reduced biodiversity and might explain why some places are not in the 'top 16'.
Level	Mark	Descriptor
Level 0	0	No acceptable response.
Level 1	1–4	- Demonstrates isolated or generic elements of geographical knowledge and understanding, some of which may be inaccurate or irrelevant. (AO1) - Applies knowledge and understanding to geographical information inconsistently. Connections/relationships between stimulus material and the question may be irrelevant. (AO2) - Applies knowledge and understanding of geographical information/ideas to produce an interpretation with limited relevance and/or support. (AO2)
Level 2	5-7	- Demonstrates geographical knowledge and understanding, which is mostly relevant and may include some inaccuracies. (AO1) - Applies knowledge and understanding to geographical information to find some relevant connections/relationships between stimulus material and the question. (AO2) - Applies knowledge and understanding of geographical information/ideas to produce a partial but coherent interpretation that is mostly relevant and supported by evidence. (AO2)
Level 3	8-10	- Demonstrates accurate and relevant geographical knowledge and understanding throughout. (AO1) - Applies knowledge and understanding to geographical information logically to find fully relevant connections/relationships between stimulus material and the question. (AO2) - Applies knowledge and understanding of geographical information/ideas to produce a full and coherent interpretation that is relevant and supported by

	evidence. (AO2)
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Question Number	Assess the extent to which economic development inevitably leads to the destruction of ecosystems. Indicative content
2(b)	AO1 (5 marks)/AO2 (10 marks) Marking instructions Markers must apply the descriptors in line with the general marking guidance and the qualities outlined in the levels-based mark scheme below. Indicative content guidance The indicative content below is not prescriptive and candidates are not required to include all of it. Other relevant material not suggested below must also be credited. Relevant points may include: AO1: • Economic development implies increases in total / per capita GDP and higher consumption. • Ecosystems / biodiversity are found in all countries, but its variety / scale / 'value' does vary. • Ecosystems / biodiversity can either be degraded or destroyed (e.g. deforestation) by development. • The environmental Kuznets curve is one model of the relationship between development and environment. • Attitudes and actions towards ecosystems / biodiversity are complex and change over time. AO2: • Economic development, in most cases, leads to greater industrialisation, urbanisation and pollution (water, air, land contamination) which leads to ecosystem destruction and damage. • Coral reefs are damaged by water pollution, forests cut down for development land / intensive agriculture and degraded by tourism: however, some countries (Costa Rica) prioritise ecosystems protection over development, at least to some extent. • The environmental Kuznets Curve concept suggests damage / destruction peaks at the emerging economy stage and at higher levels of development protection improves (so it is not inevitable) – however this is contested as some argue destruction is simple

		exported by developed countries. • The general argument is that wealth allows a country to luxury of protection, whereas the drive wealth leads to exploitation (emerging / developing countries); however, some lower-income countries to protect and conserve, especially when their ecosystems generate income (St Lucia, Costa Rice, Kenya). • It could be argued that destruction simply slows down at very high levels of development (National Parks, conservation areas) but that lost ecosystem / biodiversity is not restored; similarly, ecosystems might be seen to be monetised (tourism) rather than genuinely protected. • It could be argued that at high levels of economic development some local threats are reduced (hunting, deforestation) through better management – but that global threats (climate change, acidification) grow so the threat does not reduce.
Level	Mark	Descriptor
Level 0	0	No acceptable response.
Level 1	1–4	• Demonstrates isolated or generic elements of geographical knowledge and understanding, some of which may be inaccurate or irrelevant. (AO1) • Applies knowledge and understanding to geographical information inconsistently. Connections/relationships between stimulus material and the question may be irrelevant. (AO2) • Applies knowledge and understanding of geographical information/ideas to produce an interpretation with limited relevance and/or support. (AO2)
Level 2	5–8	• Demonstrates geographical knowledge and understanding, which is occasionally relevant and may include some inaccuracies. (AO1) • Applies knowledge and understanding of geographical information/ideas with limited but logical connections/relationships to produce a partial interpretation that is supported by some evidence but has limited coherence. (AO2) • Applies knowledge and understanding of geographical information/ideas to come to a conclusion, partially supported by an unbalanced argument with limited coherence. (AO2)

Level 3	9-12	• Demonstrates geographical knowledge and understanding, which is mostly relevant and may include some inaccuracies. (AO1) • Applies knowledge and understanding of geographical information/ideas logically, making some relevant connections/relationships. (AO2) • Applies knowledge and understanding of geographical information/ideas to produce a partial but coherent interpretation that is mostly relevant and supported by evidence. (AO2)
Level 4	13-15	• Demonstrates accurate and relevant geographical knowledge and understanding throughout. (AO1) • Applies knowledge and understanding of geographical information/ideas logically, making relevant connections/relationships. (AO2) • Applies knowledge and understanding of geographical information/ideas to produce a full and coherent interpretation that is relevant and supported by evidence. (AO2)

Question Number	To what extent is human migration increasingly explained by extreme weather events and climate change? Indicative content
3	AO1 (5 marks)/AO2 (10 marks) Marking instructions Markers must apply the descriptors in line with the general marking guidance and the qualities outlined in the levels-based mark scheme below. Indicative content guidance The indicative content below is not prescriptive and candidates are not required to include all of it. Other relevant material not suggested below must also be credited. Relevant points may include: AO1: • Migration has risen globally (200 million migrants living outside their home country) and continues to increase. • Migration can be international or internal. • Some migration (5-10%) is caused by war / conflict / natural disasters / climate change. • Globally the majority of migrants are economic and are seeking better opportunities. • Extreme weather events are short terms and localised, whereas climate change is a broader, longer-term threat. AO2: • Extreme weather events (storms, tropical cyclones, floods) cause short-term evacuation but not migration; most people rebuild in place with help from other agencies; UN International Organisation for Migration estimates 1 billion environmental migrants in next 30 yrs. • However, climate change can lead to more frequent weather hazards and longer-term changes (sea-level rise, reduced rainfall, more frequent drought) and this could make some areas less habitable causing migration. • But these migrations (potentially Vanuatu, Tuvalu, parts of coastal estuaries) are small – but this could grow in the future depending on climate change trends. • Currently, most migration is not driven by extreme weather/ climate change but is instead caused by the search for work e.g. rural-urban migration in India, China, Indonesia and international

		migration (Mexico-USA, South Asia-UAE). • War and conflict have caused major migrations from Syria, Iran, Ukraine, Afghanistan) which again are not caused by physical processes / change; some might argue that migration from Africa to Europe is partly driven by climate related changes that have made farming and water supply much more challenging. • It could be argued that data / statistics on migration are hard to interpret; often incomplete; migration has complex, multiple motivations rather than having one cause.
Level	Mark	Descriptor
Level 0	0	No acceptable response.
Level 1	1–4	• Demonstrates isolated or generic elements of geographical knowledge and understanding, some of which may be inaccurate or irrelevant. (AO1) • Applies knowledge and understanding to geographical information inconsistently. Connections/relationships between stimulus material and the question may be irrelevant. (AO2) • Applies knowledge and understanding of geographical information/ideas to produce an interpretation with limited relevance and/or support. (AO2)
Level 2	5-8	• Demonstrates geographical knowledge and understanding, which is occasionally relevant and may include some inaccuracies. (AO1) • Applies knowledge and understanding of geographical information/ideas with limited but logical connections/relationships to produce a partial interpretation that is supported by some evidence but has limited coherence. (AO2) • Applies knowledge and understanding of geographical information/ideas to come to a conclusion, partially supported by an unbalanced argument with limited coherence. (AO2)

Level 3	9-12	• Demonstrates geographical knowledge and understanding, which is mostly relevant and may include some inaccuracies. (AO1) • Applies knowledge and understanding of geographical information/ideas logically, making some relevant connections/relationships. (AO2) • Applies knowledge and understanding of geographical information/ideas to produce a partial but coherent interpretation that is mostly relevant and supported by evidence. (AO2)
Level 4	13-15	• Demonstrates accurate and relevant geographical knowledge and understanding throughout. (AO1) • Applies knowledge and understanding of geographical information/ideas logically, making relevant connections/relationships. (AO2) • Applies knowledge and understanding of geographical information/ideas to produce a full and coherent interpretation that is relevant and supported by evidence. (AO2)

Question number	To what extent is the reliability of energy pathways the most important factor influencing the energy security of countries?
4	AO1 (5 marks)/AO2 (15 marks) Marking instructions Markers must apply the descriptors in line with the general marking guidance and the qualities outlined in the levels-based mark scheme below. Responses that demonstrate only AO1 without any AO2 should be awarded marks as follows: • Level 1 AO1 performance: 1 mark • Level 2 AO1 performance: 2 marks • Level 3 AO1 performance: 3 marks • Level 4 AO1 performance: 4-5 marks Indicative content guidance The indicative content below is not prescriptive and candidates are not required to include all of it. Other relevant material not suggested below must also be credited. Relevant points may include: AO1: • Pathways include pipelines, shipping routes, road, rail and transmission lines. • They can be national or international; trade in fossil fuels relies on international pathways. • These can be disrupted by many events (conflict, price rises, sanctions), potentially reducing energy supply. • Other factors influence energy security especially domestic supplies, policy decisions, energy mix and more. • Energy security implies reliable, affordable supply – some might add ‘green’ to this. AO2: • Pathways, especially international pathways for oil and gas, can create risk when disrupted e.g. by conflict such as the Russia-Ukraine war beginning in 2022; this reduced gas supplies to Europe because of sanctions and Russian actions to cut off gas; it also increased prices so affordability declined. • However, most European countries have switched supplies (to Qatar, USA, Norway) so energy insecurity was temporary, and increased renewable energy production (wind, solar) to partially fill the gap, diversify the energy mix and increase security. • Elsewhere pathways can be disrupted by extreme weather (Gulf of Mexico hurricanes), conflict (Persian Gulf) and disruptions to shipping (Red Sea) but these are relatively short term.

		• Over-reliance on any energy source can lead to energy insecurity because of the risk of price rises, which can be unrelated to pathway disruption e.g. global oil prices in 2007 and 2011; on the other hand a broad energy mix – especially when production is domestic – spreads risk and increases energy security. • Some countries have very high energy security because of their huge domestic energy potential – both renewable and fossil fuel – such as the USA and Canada; arguably countries with an energy deficit that rely on imports (Japan) are the ones likely to experience insecurity, so it very much depends on place / physical geography. • Local / national pathways can sometimes be a risk, leading to widespread blackouts / load-shedding in South Africa and India because grid infrastructure cannot meet demand; on the other hand the UK relies in European interconnectors which are highly reliable. • Political decisions to limit / ban the use of some energy sources e.g. nuclear in Germany, or onshore wind in the UK in the past, can reduce security by closing off some potential energy sources. • Some might argue that energy insecurity can usually be traced back to poor decision making by governments i.e. failure to invest locally, over-reliance on imports / single energy sources.
Level	Mark	Descriptor
	0	No rewardable material.
Level 1	1–5	• Demonstrates isolated elements of geographical knowledge and understanding, some of which may be inaccurate or irrelevant. (AO1) • Applies knowledge and understanding of geographical ideas, making limited and rarely logical connections/relationships. (AO2) • Applies knowledge and understanding of geographical information/ideas to produce an interpretation with limited coherence and support from evidence. (AO2) • Applies knowledge and understanding of geographical information/ideas to produce an unsupported or generic conclusion, drawn from an argument that is unbalanced or lacks coherence. (AO2)

Level 2	6-10	• Demonstrates geographical knowledge and understanding, which is occasionally relevant and may include some inaccuracies. (AO1) • Applies knowledge and understanding of geographical information/ideas with limited but logical connections/relationships. (AO2) • Applies knowledge and understanding of geographical ideas in order to produce a partial interpretation that is supported by some evidence but has limited coherence. (AO2) • Applies knowledge and understanding of geographical information/ideas to come to a conclusion, partially supported by an unbalanced argument with limited coherence. (AO2)
Level 3	11-15	• Demonstrates geographical knowledge and understanding, which is mostly relevant and accurate. (AO1) • Applies knowledge and understanding of geographical information/ideas to find some logical and relevant connections/relationships. (AO2) • Applies knowledge and understanding of geographical ideas in order to produce a partial but coherent interpretation that is supported by some evidence. (AO2) • Applies knowledge and understanding of geographical information/ideas to come to a conclusion, largely supported by an argument that may be unbalanced or partially coherent. (AO2)
Level 4	16-20	• Demonstrates accurate and relevant geographical knowledge and understanding throughout. (AO1) • Applies knowledge and understanding of geographical information/ideas to find fully logical and relevant connections/relationships. (AO2) • Applies knowledge and understanding of geographical information/ideas to produce a full and coherent interpretation that is supported by evidence. (AO2) • Applies knowledge and understanding of geographical information/ideas to come to a rational, substantiated conclusion, fully supported by a balanced argument that is drawn together coherently. (AO2)

Question Number	To what extent is climate the most important factor influencing global and local patterns of water scarcity?
5	AO1 (5 marks)/AO2 (15 marks) Marking instructions Markers must apply the descriptors in line with the general marking guidance and the qualities outlined in the levels-based mark scheme below. Responses that demonstrate only AO1 without any AO2 should be awarded marks as follows: • Level 1 AO1 performance: 1 mark • Level 2 AO1 performance: 2 marks • Level 3 AO1 performance: 3 marks • Level 4 AO1 performance: 4–5 marks Indicative content guidance The indicative content below is not prescriptive and candidates are not required to include all of it. Other relevant material not suggested below must also be credited. Relevant points may include: AO1: • Climate represents the average conditions (temperature + precipitation) in a place over 30 years. • Climate influences water input (precipitation) and output (evaporation) and water availability on a global scale via the GCM /high and low pressures areas. • Water scarcity implies a lack of available, affordable, reliable, safe supply – it can be physical or economic. • A wide range of other factors (geology, demand management, pollution, policy, technology) also influence water scarcity, especially locally. • Human interference in the local hydrological cycle can increase and decrease water scarcity. AO2 • Climate can be considered an important factor at a global scale; water scarcity is generally low in temperate and high latitude locations, and equatorial locations where precipitation is high and river flows / groundwater supply is large. • Arid and semi-arid areas (Sahel, Australia, Middle East) have lower precipitation inputs and much more seasonal supply (Global Circulation Model); however, an already scarce water situation is often exacerbated by poor water management e.g. over-abstraction of groundwater (Punjab), coastal salt-water encroachment i.e. local patterns and factors.

		- Perhaps more important than climate driven water inputs is the supply versus demand balance; agriculture, domestic and industrial demand often exceeds supply and human activity reduces available water through pollution e.g. in India. - Even in areas with very high precipitation water scarcity can be high because much of it is economic, especially in cities, where low-income groups rely on expensive water vendors despite high precipitation inputs; this can be overcome but requires investment by governments and NGOs – so economic factors are more significant than climate. - Climate might be seen as less significant because of water storage technology (reservoirs) and desalination – which can increase supply even in places with very low rainfall such as the UAE and Saudi Arabia – so technology can be used to reduce the relevance of climate inputs to local supply (although the costs of this water can be high, so economic scarcity still exists). - In some places climate change may soon make a water scarce situation much worse as a combination of rising demand and falling supply tip places into a water crisis e.g. India by the mid-2030s, especially in the NW. - Sharing water supplies equitably may reduce water scarcity (Nile, Mekong) but in many cases water agreements are difficult to reach. - Overall climate might be seen as only one of a range of factors that are important especially in terms of a global 'overview' of areas of surplus / deficit, with the cost of water and water management being important explanations for the existence of water scarcity, or not, at a local scale.
Level	Mark	Descriptor
	0	No rewardable material.
Level 1	1–5	- Demonstrates isolated elements of geographical knowledge and understanding, some of which may be inaccurate or irrelevant. (AO1) - Applies knowledge and understanding of geographical ideas, making limited and rarely logical connections/relationships. (AO2) - Applies knowledge and understanding of geographical information/ideas to produce an interpretation with limited coherence and support from evidence. (AO2) - Applies knowledge and understanding of geographical information/ideas to produce an unsupported or generic conclusion, drawn from an argument that is unbalanced or lacks coherence. (AO2)

Level 2	6-10	• Demonstrates geographical knowledge and understanding, which is occasionally relevant and may include some inaccuracies. (AO1) • Applies knowledge and understanding of geographical information/ideas with limited but logical connections/relationships. (AO2) • Applies knowledge and understanding of geographical ideas in order to produce a partial interpretation that is supported by some evidence but has limited coherence. (AO2) • Applies knowledge and understanding of geographical information/ideas to come to a conclusion, partially supported by an unbalanced argument with limited coherence. (AO2)
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Level 4	16-20	• Demonstrates accurate and relevant geographical knowledge and understanding throughout. (AO1) • Applies knowledge and understanding of geographical information/ideas to find fully logical and relevant connections/relationships. (AO2) • Applies knowledge and understanding of geographical information/ideas to produce a full and coherent interpretation that is supported by evidence. (AO2) • Applies knowledge and understanding of geographical information/ideas to come to a rational, substantiated conclusion, fully supported by a balanced argument that is drawn together coherently. (AO2)

Question Number	Using Figure 3, suggest why the number of patent applications has changed in these countries.	Mark
6(a)	AO1 (2 marks)/AO2 (3 marks) Award 1 mark (AO1) for each relevant point and further expansion marks for reasons/explanations linked to the data shown (AO2), up to a maximum of 5 marks. - Both countries have large increases in patent applications (1) which could suggest improvements in education / skills / research over time (1). - In India and Turkey, the 2002-2012 increase is large (1) and could be linked to patents by TNCs suggesting FDI / local companies innovating. - Investment into R&D by governments (1) as a way of boosting economic growth / increasing technological status / moving countries from emerging to developed (1). Accept other explanations if linked to the data.	(5)

Question Number	Using named examples, assess the importance of military and economic alliances in maintaining the global influence of superpowers.
6(b)	AO1 (5 marks)/AO2 (10 marks) Marking instructions Markers must apply the descriptors in line with the general marking guidance and the qualities outlined in the levels-based mark scheme below. Indicative content guidance The indicative content below is not prescriptive and candidates are not required to include all of it. Other relevant material not suggested below must also be credited. Relevant points may include: AO1: - Military alliances include NATO and ANZUS, among others, designed for collective security. - Economic alliances focus on free-trade (EU, NAFTA (USMCA), ASEAN) and promote cooperation and prosperity. - There are broader alliances such as the BRICS which are important. - Membership often overlaps and creates competing blocs. - Alliances can be seen as both political and economic, and as such as part of the pillars of powers concept, but influence comes in other ways e.g. cultural, diplomatic, resources. - USA, China, EU, Russia, India can all be considered superpowers, so some extent.

	AO2: • Alliances in general might be considered important as most superpowers and emerging powers belong to many – very few countries (India) have attempted to remain outside such blocs. • Military alliances, especially NATO, might be considered important to the USA and Europe as a nuclear-armed deterrent (both in the Cold War, and today against China / Russia), especially the collective security element NATO; military power / threat might be seen as a key part of superpower status. • Some might argue that economic alliances – especially free trade blocs – promote cooperation, trade and globalisation and help generate the wealth superpowers and emerging powers need for the pillars or power 'base'; although these might be seen as one-sided / exploitative (Belt and Road Initiative, arguably United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement) benefiting the most powerful disproportionately. • Economic alliances are only one part of economic power; the dominance of US TNCs in the global economy might be viewed as more important than the USA's membership of economic blocs especially as this brings with it cultural influence. • Members of both types of alliance that are small 'players' are still not powerful countries, so population size, technology and resources (USA, China, India, Brazil, Russia) might be considered as necessary to gain influence – not just membership of alliances. • Geopolitical power might be seen as flowing from influence in IGOs (UN, WTO, IMF) as well as from alliances with other countries. • Other factors in the 'pillars of power' model might be evidenced and considered more / less important compared to military and economic alliances.	
Level	Mark	Descriptor
	0	No rewardable material.
Level 1	1–4	• Demonstrates isolated elements of geographical knowledge and understanding, some of which may be inaccurate or irrelevant. (AO1) • Applies knowledge and understanding of geographical information/ideas, making limited and rarely logical connections/relationships, to produce an interpretation with limited relevance and/or support. (AO2) • Applies knowledge and understanding of geographical information/ideas to produce an unsupported or generic conclusion, drawn from an argument that is unbalanced or lacks coherence. (AO2)

Level 2	5-8	• Demonstrates geographical knowledge and understanding, which is occasionally relevant and may include some inaccuracies. (AO1) • Applies knowledge and understanding of geographical information/ideas with limited but logical connections/relationships to produce a partial interpretation that is supported by some evidence but has limited coherence. (AO2) • Applies knowledge and understanding of geographical information/ideas to come to a conclusion, partially supported by an unbalanced argument with limited coherence. (AO2)
Level 3	9-12	• Demonstrates geographical knowledge and understanding, which is mostly relevant and may include some inaccuracies. (AO1) • Applies knowledge and understanding of geographical information/ideas logically, making some relevant connections/relationships. (AO2) • Applies knowledge and understanding of geographical information/ideas to produce a partial but coherent interpretation that is mostly relevant and supported by evidence. (AO2)
Level 4	13-15	• Demonstrates accurate and relevant geographical knowledge and understanding throughout. (AO1) • Applies knowledge and understanding of geographical information/ideas logically, making relevant connections/relationships. (AO2) • Applies knowledge and understanding of geographical information/ideas to produce a full and coherent interpretation that is relevant and supported by evidence. (AO2)

Question Number	Using Figure 4, suggest why the Human Development Index scores have changed in these countries.	Mark
7(a)	AO1 (2 marks)/AO2 (3 marks) Award 1 mark (AO1) for each relevant point and further expansion marks for reasons/explanations linked to the data shown (AO2), up to a maximum of 5 marks. • In both cases HDI levels have steadily increased (1) suggesting an improvement in socio-economic conditions overall / development progress (1) • Ghana made steep progress 2002-2012 (1) which could be linked to MDG / SDG investment (1). • Investment into specific aspects of what HDI measures could explain the progress (1) such as education, healthcare e.g. hospitals / vaccinations (1). • As HDI includes income as part of the metric (1) industrialisation and modernisation / FDI could explain rising incomes. Accept other explanations if linked to the data.	(5)

Question Number	Using named examples, assess the costs and benefits of top-down development projects as a way of narrowing the development gap.
7(b)	AO1 (5 marks)/AO2 (10 marks) Marking instructions Markers must apply the descriptors in line with the general marking guidance and the qualities outlined in the levels-based mark scheme below. Indicative content guidance The indicative content below is not prescriptive and candidates are not required to include all of it. Other relevant material not suggested below must also be credited. Relevant points may include: AO1: • The development gap is the difference in incomes / quality of life between low- and high-income groups, between and within countries. • Top-down development is large-scale, costly and (usually) run by government. • Top-down development has large-scale aims designed to affect large numbers of people / change an economy in a significant way. • There are other approaches, such as bottom-up, and a wide variety of other ways of narrowing the development gap (Fairtrade, aid, debt relief, FDI).

		AO2: • Top-down strategies (HEP dams, railway systems, airports, commercial farming) might be seen as being able to 'kickstart' development by providing modern infrastructure that reduces business costs and creates opportunities for people – in a way that bottom-up / small-scale schemes cannot do. • However, top-down schemes can be high cost (possibly leading to debt) raising questions about affordability / spending priorities; however, the investment could pay off if the scheme creates jobs / investment. • Critics would argue top-down schemes ignore local needs and often cause people to be displaced (reservoirs, local traders in favour of foreign imports) or otherwise ignored – schemes often benefit cities rather than rural areas, so the development gap may not be narrowed despite overall wealth increasing. • Nevertheless, without some top-down investment it may be hard for a country / region to 'modernise' (Rostow) and transition towards secondary / tertiary sector jobs. • Top-down investment might be seen as exploitative and one-sided e.g. Chinese investment in east African railways and ports (also Sri Lanka) as more about promoting Chinese-bound trade rather than benefitting local people and businesses. • Some might argue bottom-up also has costs and benefits, as do other strategies such as aid, Fairtrade and debt relief – so that no one strategy is perfect.
Level	Mark	Descriptor
	0	No rewardable material.
Level 1	1–4	• Demonstrates isolated elements of geographical knowledge and understanding, some of which may be inaccurate or irrelevant. (AO1) • Applies knowledge and understanding of geographical information/ideas, making limited and rarely logical connections/relationships, to produce an interpretation with limited relevance and/or support. (AO2) • Applies knowledge and understanding of geographical information/ideas to produce an unsupported or generic conclusion, drawn from an argument that is unbalanced or lacks coherence. (AO2)

Level 2	5-8	• Demonstrates geographical knowledge and understanding, which is occasionally relevant and may include some inaccuracies. (AO1) • Applies knowledge and understanding of geographical information/ideas with limited but logical connections/relationships to produce a partial interpretation that is supported by some evidence but has limited coherence. (AO2) • Applies knowledge and understanding of geographical information/ideas to come to a conclusion, partially supported by an unbalanced argument with limited coherence. (AO2)
Level 3	9-12	• Demonstrates geographical knowledge and understanding, which is mostly relevant and may include some inaccuracies. (AO1) • Applies knowledge and understanding of geographical information/ideas logically, making some relevant connections/relationships. (AO2) • Applies knowledge and understanding of geographical information/ideas to produce a partial but coherent interpretation that is mostly relevant and supported by evidence. (AO2)
Level 4	13-15	• Demonstrates accurate and relevant geographical knowledge and understanding throughout. (AO1) • Applies knowledge and understanding of geographical information/ideas logically, making relevant connections/relationships. (AO2) • Applies knowledge and understanding of geographical information/ideas to produce a full and coherent interpretation that is relevant and supported by evidence. (AO2)