

Markscheme

November 2025

Geography

Higher level

Paper 3

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Paper 3 part (a) markbands

Marks	Level descriptor		
	<p>AO1: Knowledge and understanding of specified content</p> <p>AO2: Application and analysis of knowledge and understanding</p>	<p>AO3: Synthesis and evaluation</p>	<p>AO4: Selection, use and application of a variety of appropriate skills and techniques</p>
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.		
1–3	<p>The response is general, not focused on the question, and lacks detail and structure.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The response is very brief or general, listing a series of unconnected comments or largely irrelevant information. Evidence is general or relevant to the topic, but not to the question. • Evidence (that is, facts, statistics, examples or theories) is listed, lacks detail, and the relevance to the question is unclear. • Evidence is not used to formulate an argument or an analysis. • Everyday language is used; there is little use of geographical terminology, or it is used with errors in understanding. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No evidence of synthesis or evaluation is expected. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information is listed but is not grouped together in paragraphs, or paragraphing is erratic. • If present, the conclusion is brief, does not summarize the argument and/or does not address the question. 		
4–6	<p>The response only partially addresses the question; evidence is both relevant and irrelevant and is largely unstructured.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The response partially addresses the question and/or does not meet the requirements of the command term. Key evidence is not included. • A mix of relevant and irrelevant evidence is outlined (that is, facts, statistics, examples or theories) and any links to the question are only listed. • The evidence presented supports only one element or interpretation of the question. • Key geographical terms are defined briefly. The terminology used is both relevant and irrelevant to the question. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No evidence of synthesis or evaluation is expected. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paragraphs do not reflect grouping of information that addresses a specific element of the question. • If present, the conclusion is one-sided, addressing only part of the question. 		

<p>7–9</p>	<p>The response addresses most parts of the question and outlines an analysis supported by relevant evidence but may lack clear links between paragraphs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The question is broken down into parts and most parts of the question are addressed in the response, with supporting evidence for each aspect of the question. The response meets the requirements of the command term. • Relevant evidence (that is, facts, statistics, examples or theories) is described, focused on the question and mostly correct. Links with the question are described. • The analysis outlines a two-sided argument briefly (if appropriate) and is mostly descriptive, using examples as explanation. • Correct definitions are given, and relevant and irrelevant specialist geographical terms are used with occasional errors; or everyday language is used. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No evidence of synthesis or evaluation is expected. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A series of standalone paragraphs each addressing a specific element of the question but lacking clear links connecting them all into a coherent whole. • The conclusion repeats and summarizes the analysis or argument, but may contain new information as well.
<p>10–12</p>	<p>The response addresses all aspects of the question; the analysis is explained using evidence integrated in the paragraphs, and it is well structured.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All aspects of the question are addressed, and the response meets the requirements of the command term. • Detailed evidence (that is, facts, statistics, examples or theories) are integrated in sentences and paragraphs, and links made between evidence and the question are explained and relevant. • The response explains how the two sides of the argument (if appropriate) are supported by detailed evidence that is integrated in sentences. • Clear, correct definitions and use of geographical language is integrated in the sentences and throughout the response. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No evidence of synthesis or evaluation is expected. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paragraphs focus on a relevant point of the argument and integrate the supporting evidence. Paragraphs are linked and support the logical flow of the argument and response. • The conclusion summarizes the evidence and argument, and links all back to the question.

Paper 3 part (b) markbands

Marks	Level descriptor		
	<p>AO1: Knowledge and understanding of specified content</p> <p>AO2: Application and analysis of knowledge and understanding</p>	<p>AO3: Synthesis and evaluation</p>	<p>AO4: Selection, use and application of a variety of appropriate skills and techniques</p>
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.		
1–4	<p>The response is general, not focused on the question, and lacks detail and structure.</p>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The response is very brief or general, listing a series of unconnected comments or largely irrelevant information. Evidence is general or relevant to the topic, but not the question. • Evidence (that is, facts, statistics, examples or theories) is listed, lacks detail, and the relevance to the question is unclear. • Evidence is not used to formulate an argument or an analysis. • Everyday language is used; there is little use of geographical terminology or it is used with errors in understanding. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No synthesis or evaluation is expected at this level. • No links are presented between the response and (sub)topics in the guide. • No valid opinion or perspective on the issue is formulated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information is listed but is not grouped together in paragraphs, or paragraphing is erratic. • If present, the conclusion is brief, does not summarize the argument and/or does not address the question.
5–8	<p>The response only partially addresses the question with limited links to the guide; evidence is both relevant and irrelevant and is largely unstructured.</p>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The response partially addresses the question and/or does not meet the requirements of the command term. Key evidence is not included. • A mix of relevant and irrelevant evidence is outlined (that is, facts, statistics, examples or theories) and any links to the question are only listed. • The evidence presented supports only one element or interpretation of the question. • Key geographical terms are defined briefly. Terminology used is both relevant and irrelevant to the question. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No synthesis or evaluation is expected at this level. • The link(s) between the response and the guide focus on one topic; other potential links are listed. • A valid but limited opinion or perspective on the issue is formulated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paragraphs do not reflect grouping of information that addresses a specific element of the question. • If present, the conclusion is one-sided, addressing only part of the question.

<p>9–12</p>	<p>The response addresses most parts of the question with developed links to the guide and outlines an analysis supported by relevant evidence but may lack clear links between paragraphs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The question is broken down into parts and most parts of the question are addressed in the response, with supporting evidence for each aspect of the question. The response meets the requirements of the command term. • Relevant evidence (that is, facts, statistics, examples or theories) is described, focused on the question and mostly correct. Links with the question are described. • The analysis outlines a two-sided argument briefly (if appropriate) and is mostly descriptive, using examples as explanation. • Correct definitions are given, and relevant and irrelevant specialist geographical terms are used with occasional errors; or everyday language is used. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Synthesis or evaluation is required at this level. • Links between the response and the guide refer to multiple topics and are described. • Opinion or perspective presented is aligned with the response, but the links are not made explicit, or the link is a general statement. Other perspectives or interpretations are listed without details. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A series of standalone paragraphs each addressing a specific element of the question but lacking clear links connecting them all into a coherent whole. • The conclusion repeats and summarizes the analysis or argument, but may contain new information as well.
<p>13–16</p>	<p>The response addresses all aspects of the question; the analysis is explained and evaluated using evidence integrated in the paragraphs, and it is well structured.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All aspects of the question are addressed and the response meets the requirements of the command term. • Detailed evidence (that is, facts, statistics, examples or theories) are integrated in sentences and paragraphs, and links made between evidence and the question are explained and relevant. • The response explains how the two sides of the argument (if appropriate) are supported by detailed evidence that is integrated in sentences. • Clear, correct definitions and use of geographical language is integrated in the sentences and throughout the response. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Synthesis and evaluation is required at this level. • Links between the response and (sub)topics from the guide are explained and supported by the evidence in the response. • The opinion or perspective presented is explicitly linked to the range of evidence included in the response, including critical analysis of the relative certainty of evidence used, describing other perspectives or interpretations of evidence. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paragraphs focus on a relevant point of the argument and integrate the supporting evidence. Paragraphs are linked and support the logical flow of the argument and response. • The conclusion summarizes the evidence and argument, and links all back to the question.

1. (a) Analyse how countries can gain global power by joining multi-governmental organizations (MGOs). [12]

Marks should be allocated according to the markbands on pages 3 to 4.

Global power is the ability to directly make or influence change or equilibrium at different scales. Power is vested in citizens, governments, institutions and other players. Different kinds of power include soft power (exerting influence through diplomacy, culture, the media and other “soft” strategies) and hard power, including military strength and economic power and influence (eg the collective pricing strategy of OPEC, or use of sanctions).

Examples of **multi-governmental organizations** range from the United Nations to regional trade blocs. Other examples include the oil cartel OPEC and NATO, sometimes described as a collective security organization. All reasonable examples should be fully credited. Credit may be given to answers that are focused on global agreements and agencies provided there is justifiable focus on the membership of countries and the power they gain.

By **joining** an organization, countries derive benefits but may surrender freedoms including sovereignty / sovereign power over flows of people and goods in the case of the European Union. High scoring answers will be more likely to have a sustained focus on power. In contrast, lower scoring answers may list benefits gained from joining a trade bloc, but with little if any link to power. Likely themes for analysis include:

- A key benefit of trade bloc membership, in theory, is free trade leading to increasing national income - which may in turn be used to support different soft or hard power strategies.
- Trade bloc members benefit from ‘safety in numbers’ and collective bargaining power; they participate in multilateral action on the world stage, thus gaining influence.
- Certain countries have disproportionate influence within the United Nations and its agencies, for example the US plays an outsized role in IMF decision-making and has a permanent Security Council seat.
- The OPEC organization has transformed the economic fortunes of some members over time such as Saudi Arabia - resulting in greater economic and geopolitical power/influence.
- NATO membership is an important part of the hard power strategy of its partners including the US, Australia and New Zealand.

Good answers may **apply** (AO2) a **wider range** of knowledge and understanding (AO1) in a **well-structured** way (AO4). One approach might be to provide a structured systematic analysis of different aspects of **power** that derive either directly or indirectly from joining an MGO. Another approach might be to critically analyse the net benefits of membership, given there is a **possibility** of gaining some forms of power at the expense of others, especially in relationship to sovereignty and the ability to act unilaterally.

For 4–6 marks, expect some weakly evidenced outlining of one or two benefits (power may be only implied) countries gain from joining MGO(s).

For 7–9 marks, expect a structured, evidenced analysis of:

- either two or more ways global power is gained by joining MGO(s) (focus may be largely on wealth/trade, with power only implied, at 7-8 marks)
- or a wider range of MGO contexts or outcomes for countries (e.g. analyses the trade-off between sovereign and multilateral power and influence)

For 10–12 marks, expect both of these traits.

1. (b) “People don’t have to participate in globalization if they don’t want to.”
Discuss this statement.

[16]

Credit all content in line with the markbands. Marks should be allocated according to the markbands on pages 5 to 6. Credit unexpected approaches wherever relevant.

Globalization is a complex set of processes by which the world has become increasingly integrated as a single economic unit and local places have become more interconnected and interdependent. Globalization is often viewed as a product of market forces, neoliberal political governance and technological advancement.

People include the citizens of states ranging from autocracies to democracies. The choices people make may reflect their geographical context, income, education, beliefs or membership of civil society organizations. The actions and motivations of people can be explored in a range of contexts and at different scales ranging from migration to online purchasing.

Participation can be interpreted in many ways. When people buy products made in other countries they are ‘participating’ in global trade (there may be no other choice due to the way supply chains operate). Some people use their phones mainly to consume domestic local media, in which case they are arguably *not* participating in globalization. People crossing a border from one country to another might be described as participants in globalization. An opposing view might be that this is a relatively local movement and not a truly global flow.

Possible **applied** themes (AO2) include **knowledge and understanding** (AO1) of how:

- Globalization indices [*Guide 4.1*]
- The range of different global networks and flows [*Guide 4.2*]
- Examples of transnational corporations and their supply chains [*Guide 4.2*]
- Shrinking world technology [*Guide 4.3*]
- Resistance to global interactions [*Guide 5.3*]
- Globalization and nationalism [*Guide 6.1*]
- Re-shoring by TNCs (used as a counterargument) [*Guide 6.3*]

Good answers may **synthesize** (AO3a) three or more of the above (or other) themes in a **well-structured** (AO4) way.

Good answers may additionally offer a **critical evaluation** (AO3b) of the statement that discusses different aspects of globalization and the decision people in certain **places** may make to resist. Another approach might be to critically discuss the **power** of different groups, places or countries to resist global forces or find alternative ways of living. Another approach might be to discuss the view that there are people who want to participate in globalization yet are denied this **possibility**, for example by the state, and this provides a different **perspective** on the discussion. A good evaluation may conclude with a substantiated final judgement on the overall degree to which the statement is true.

For 5–8 marks, expect weakly-evidenced outlining of two or three relevant themes.

For 9–12 marks, expect:

- either a structured synthesis that links several well-evidenced themes from the guide
- or a critical conclusion (or ongoing evaluation) informed by geographical concepts and/or perspectives.

For 13–16 marks, expect both of these traits.

2. (a) Explain how microfinance organizations can help close the development gap between different places and people. [12]

Marks should be allocated according to the markbands on pages 3 to 4.

A **microfinance organization** is a financial institution or organization that provides financial services in the form of small loans to individuals or small businesses who typically lack access to traditional banking. The goal of microfinance is to promote economic development by offering lower-risk financial services. Well-known examples of microfinance organizations include Grameen bank and Kiva.

Development is a multistrand process with economic, social and political dimensions. Any marked differences in income, health, longevity or opportunity between different countries, societies or social groups can be termed a **development gap**.

Some microfinance organizations empower marginalized **people and places** where need is greatest, for example by lending to women in rural areas in middle-income or lower-income countries. Higher-scoring responses may demonstrate better understanding of the concept of place, for example by using named *local* examples.

Likely themes for explanation include:

- Detailed examples of microfinance organizations.
- The importance of microfinance as a financial flow within global networks and systems.
- The concept of human development, including its economic and social aspects such as education and health.
- The concept of a development gap at different scales for example between rural and urban places or between countries in the global north and global south, or between groups of people including men and women or different cultural groups.
- Links between microfinance and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

A critique is not asked for in the question. The focus is how microfinance helps close the development gap - not its shortcomings. Material that criticizes microfinance should only be credited if it contributes usefully to a critical analysis of the closing of the development gap (eg, an answer might explain how microfinance organizations try to overcome certain challenges to maximize their success in closing the development gap.

Good answers may **apply** (AO2) a **wider range** of knowledge and understanding (AO1) in a **well-structured** way (AO4). One approach might be to provide a structured systematic explanation of different development **processes** over time (e.g. rising wealth, health, literacy) that are supported by microfinance, or links and **connections** between different development gaps (for example, increased incomes can support increased healthcare). Another approach might be to explain how microfinance may be targeted at particular social groups with a view to **empowerment**, for example through lending to women.

For 4–6 marks, expect some weakly evidenced outlining of one or two benefits of microfinance for people or places.

For 7–9 marks, expect a structured, evidenced analysis of:

- either two or more ways in which people and/or places have been helped by microfinance organizations
- or a greater variety of different kinds of development gaps, goals or theories

For 10–12 marks, expect both of these traits.

2. (b) “More good than harm has come from the growth of global supply chains.” To what extent do you agree with this statement? [16]

Credit all content in line with the markbands. Marks should be allocated according to the markbands on pages 5 to 6. Credit unexpected approaches wherever relevant.

Global supply chains are business networks composed of interdependent TNCs and smaller-scale companies who supply parts or services to clients. Over time supply chains have grown to become more complex, composed of many thousands of suppliers and partner companies in the case of the world’s larger TNCs.

The **good** done by supply chain growth might be conceptualized as economic, social, cultural or political. An argument can be made that inward investment has raised incomes in global South countries, for example China and Bangladesh, while consumers benefit from cheap goods. Economic growth in turn can fund healthcare. Supply chains heighten the interdependence of countries which, it might be argued, could support geopolitical stability.

The **harm** might be conceptualized as environmental, social or economic. Poor regulation of supply chain activities may contribute to local atmospheric or water pollution, including transboundary pollution. Working conditions in factories may be poor, especially in countries where industrialization is recent. From this perspective, global North countries benefit at the expense of global South countries. Extensive supply chains also create new risks for businesses and countries in the event of their disruption by physical or human forces.

Possible **applied** themes (AO2) include **knowledge and understanding** (AO1) of:

- Global networks and flows [Guide 4.2]
- Examples of transnational corporations and their supply chains [Guide 4.2]
- Shrinking world technology [Guide 4.3]
- Global growth and development [Guide 5.2]
- Global shift of polluting industries [Guide 6.2]
- Carbon footprints for different flows and societies [Guide 6.2]
- Electronic waste in the global South [Guide 3.2]
- Economic risks for societies [Guide 6.1]
- Renewed nationalism [Guide 6.1] and re-shoring by TNCs [Guide 6.3]

Detailed answers that discuss how global trade and TNCs have contributed to themes such as climate change, cultural changes and economic development are unlikely to reach the top band if they do not include specific knowledge and understanding of actual supply chains.

Good answers may **synthesize** (AO3a) three or more of the above (or other) themes in a **well-structured** (AO4) way.

Good answers may additionally offer a **critical evaluation** (AO3b) of the statement that discusses categories of ‘good’ and ‘harm’ and the extent to which **places** experience the former or latter. Another approach might be to critically discuss the role supply chains play in fostering **interactions**, connectivity and interdependency, and varying **perspectives** on this. Another approach might be to discuss how far supply chains introduce a heightened **possibility** of risk, for example during the pandemic, or recent conflicts. A good evaluation may conclude with a substantiated final judgement on the overall degree to which the statement is true.

For 5–8 marks, expect weakly-evidenced outlining of two or three relevant themes.

For 9–12 marks, expect:

- either a structured synthesis that links several well-evidenced themes from the guide
- or a critical conclusion (or ongoing evaluation) informed by geographical concepts and/or perspectives.

For 13–16 marks, expect both of these traits.

3. (a) Analyse how availability of natural resources has affected the global connectivity of different places.

[12]

Marks should be allocated according to the markbands on pages 3 to 4.

Natural resources are elements of the physical environment that human beings can harness in ways that enhance their wellbeing, health or wealth - utilizing whatever technology is available. The relationship between people and resources is complex, for example local people may be unable to harness a power source because they lack access to technology that others possess.

Interconnectivity describes the way in which places at varying scales become linked together in mutual relations of exchange and even self-reliance at which point interconnection becomes interdependency. Connectivity can be economic, social and cultural - there are many dimensions. TNCs often play a key role in making global links.

Place is a concept that is applicable at varying scales. Answers are likely to focus on connections between countries, but strong answers may identify named cities and rural regions that have become connected, or acknowledge that not all people in different places are equally connected.

Likely themes for analysis include:

- Examples of natural resource availability in specific countries or local areas.
- Lack of resources as a reason for connectivity (imports are needed)
- The global influence and connectivity of OPEC countries, due to oil.
- Technology and connectivity as other factors that may determine whether natural resources are exploited thereby affecting connectivity.
- Transnational corporations and their need for raw materials.
- Physically isolated places where natural resources may be difficult to access.
- Whether resource-rich countries/regions initiated connections and trade themselves or were colonized/invaded by outside force.

The question asks for an analysis of how (availability or lack of) natural resources affects connectivity, but not a discussion of alternative types of connection eg the internet and the spread of culture. Answers that discuss alternative themes to the question focus may still gain partial credit for understanding shown of the concept of place and connectivity, however.

Good answers may **apply** (AO2) a **wider range** of knowledge and understanding (AO1) in a **well-structured** way (AO4). One approach might be to provide a structured systematic analysis of different types of connection and **interaction** (flows of commodities, money, people). Another approach might be to analyse who has **power** to create these connections and exploit the resources (local people or external forces). Another approach might be to carefully analyse **places** at **different** scales for example specific areas, eg Niger Delta or entire countries, eg Saudi Arabia.

For 4–6 marks, expect some weakly-evidenced outlining of a natural resource such as oil that can be traded.

For 7–9 marks, expect a structured, evidenced analysis of:

- either how places where natural resources are available become better connected in one or two ways eg by trade and investment
- or a greater variety of different types of global connection eg flows of people (workers, invading armies), ideas (technology), carbon flows etc.

For 10–12 marks, expect both of these traits.

3. (b) “The internet has played a larger role in global cultural change than migration has.” [16]
To what extent do you agree with this statement?

Credit all content in line with the markbands. Marks should be allocated according to the markbands on pages 5 to 6. Credit unexpected approaches wherever relevant.

Culture comprises a wide spectrum of cultural traits (language, food, music, religion etc) and a shared sense of belonging. Any of these individual traits, such as language, can form the basis for a discussion of **global cultural change**.

Migration occurs over varying scales, ranging from internal migration to near-neighbour international migration to longer-distance international migration flows, for example between global South and global North countries. Migration may be voluntary or forced and can result in the growth of diaspora populations and hybrid cultures, depending on the extent to which cultural exchange occurs. Historical migration flows for example during the colonial era have had a great impact on global cultural change overtime.

The internet consists of multiple data flows and technologies, including, social media, and streaming television and music. Digital flows of data are associated with recent decades; ideas and information in other analogue or spoken form have been exchanged on a global scale ever since people first began migrate.

Possible **applied** themes (AO2) include **knowledge and understanding** (AO1) of:

- The spectrum of cultural diversity [*Guide 5.2*]
- Globalization [*Guide 4.1*]
- Technology and connectivity [*Guide 4.3*]
- Shrinking world technology [*Guide 4.3*]
- Diasporas, diversity and identity [*Guide 5.2*]
- Resistance to global flows (eg migration policies or firewalls) [*Guide 5.3*]

Material relating to alternative factors, such as TNCs, may only have limited relevance for the task set. Award credit for understanding of cultural change, or if links and connections have been established with migration and data flows (eg TNC staff migrate between countries; technology and media TNCs create data flows).

Good answers may **synthesize** (AO3a) three or more of the above (or other) themes in a **well-structured** (AO4) way.

Good answers may additionally offer a **critical evaluation** (AO3b) of the statement that discusses cultural **processes** at a range of **scales**, including global and national (city) scales, or in contrasting rural and urban contexts. Another approach might be to critically discuss **power** struggles over migration or data flows in different **places**, and the extent to which change may or may not occur as a result of barriers. A good evaluation may conclude with a substantiated final judgement on the overall degree to which the statement is true.

For 5–8 marks, expect weakly-evidenced outlining of two or three relevant themes.

For 9–12 marks, expect:

- either a structured synthesis that links together several well-evidenced themes from the Guide
- or a critical conclusion (or ongoing evaluation) informed by geographical concepts and/or perspectives.

For 13–16 marks, expect both of these traits
