

How to Pass Paper 1

1. The Basics:

Paper 1 is a Decision Making Exercise. That means you have to make a decision at the end. The issue that you have to make the decision about is presented to you in the paper.

- 1½ hours
- Answer all questions - 60 marks in total
- Subject will be released in advance

2. Paper Structure:

Paper 1 is like a story.



- general background - e.g. how big are LEDC cities and how quickly are they growing
- introduce the issue - e.g. push and pull factors and their impacts
- detail the issue - e.g. what problems are there for people in LEDC Cities?
- present points of view - e.g. what different local people and other groups think
- make the decision - this is the longest question making up 9 marks on a higher tier paper, 6 on foundation tier.

Along the way you'll be asked to use data, complete graphs, analyse photos, read maps and think about the general issue. The important thing is to remember that all of this is setting up the final issue - what decision do you take?

3. How to Pass Paper 1:

There are 6 key things that examiners say make a real difference. Trust us on this - we see thousands of papers every year so we've got a pretty good idea what works! Now, take your time and work through the list carefully.

3.1 Read the question properly:

OK, so you'd think this was an easy thing to do right? Think again - every year paper after paper contains answers that make it clear that the candidate hasn't read the question carefully enough.

Here's an example - a real answer from a real candidate:

Q. Which county is the Lake District located in? (a map was provided which gave the answer)
A. England

Now look back at the question. That's a really silly mistake isn't it? From a really good, clever and normally careful student. Don't believe you could do something like that? Think again.

Then, at the end of the paper, check your answers carefully. This is particularly true on simple little questions like this (again, a real answer from a real candidate):

*Q. Give the straight line distance to **the nearest kilometre** between Morland Church and Haversheaf Hall*
A. 9.8km

3.2 Do what the question tells you to do:

If it says "describe" then say what it's like. If it says "explain" say why it's like it.

People often end up doing the wrong thing. This is quite often the case with good students who read a question and think "it can't be that easy" and try to do something that they haven't been asked to do.

Just do what it says in the question!

It's amazing, but sometimes people write an answer to the question after the one they are currently on. So, Q1 might ask them to describe a graph and they, instead, write explaining why the shape is like it is; the next question then asks them to explain why it's like this. It's often a good idea to read through the questions on a page first before you start answering them

3.3 Make sure that you read the resources:

Questions say things like:

- using figure 4...
- with the help of figure 3...
- from figure 1...
- use figure 7...

These are directing you directly to the resources. So use them!

Make sure that you read them properly. You will almost certainly have enough time to finish the paper (unless you know you are a bit slow in exams) so take your time and read what the resources say.

Some people like to use a highlighter to work through each resource and highlight the key points. If there's a resource on the paper it'll be there for something. If you finish the paper and wonder what a particular resource was for you've probably made a silly error somewhere along the line.

3.4 Get the easy skills marks right:

A lot of the marks on paper 1 are skills marks. Skills like:

- using photos
- taking information from text or tables
- graph drawing
- mapwork - often using OS maps

Generally these are easy marks, so make sure that you get them. There's more on key skills later on.

Have the right equipment: You need: pens, fairly sharp pencils, a 30cm ruler, a rubber, a calculator is sometimes useful as are a few coloured pencils to help make things clear. Some people like to use a highlighter.

3.41 Photos:

Practice looking carefully at photos and using them to pick out impacts or problems in an area. Make sure you can identify features like valleys and rivers - and that you use sensible adjectives to describe them - gentle slopes, wide valleys, rugged hillsides, barren moorland etc. Whatever you do don't say "nice". The weather isn't "nice" it's hot and sunny; the scenery isn't "nice" it's beautiful or peaceful or green. Examiners hate the word "nice"... There is a download about photos available.

3.42 Text and Tables:

These should be really easy to use - but guess what? People make mistakes. Make sure you read the writing really carefully and always double check this sort of question. Did you miss something really obvious? There's nothing hard about this sort of question, as long as you're careful.

3.43 Graphs:

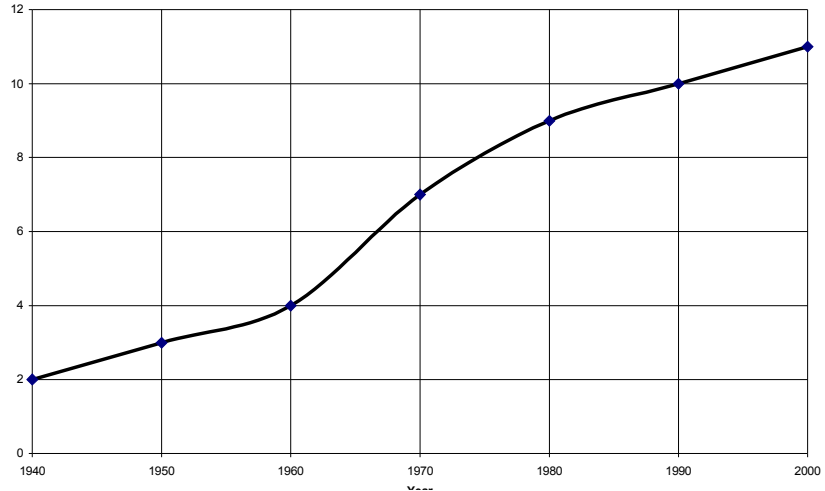
When you have to complete graphs the key is to be **accurate**. How accurate? Well, if I can see a gap between your line and the line on the graph paper I'm going to mark it wrong - every single time. **We mark graph work hard** - it's an easy skill, we're entitled to ask that you do it well.

- use a pencil - you can correct mistakes. You'd be amazed at the mess people get into with pens;
- make it a fairly sharp pencil - not a huge great thick line please;
- use a ruler - **please!** It makes it much more likely that you'll get the mark;
- if there's a key, complete it - it's an easy mark so make sure you get it.

When you have to describe graphs, be precise.

Q. Describe how the number of visitors to the Lake District has changed over the last 60 years (3 marks)

For 3 marks I don't just want "it goes up". Use adjectives and figures - it rises gently at first and then much more steeply between 1960 and 1980 before becoming more gentle again. If a graph goes up and down a nice term to use is "fluctuating".



3.44 Mapwork:

You might get sketch maps to use, in which case make sure that you look really carefully at the key, scale line and north arrow. And then use them - don't say somewhere is "above", say it's "north of"; don't say it's "near", say it's 2km away - even better, say it's "2km east of..."

There is a separate download dealing with using OS maps because they come up so often.

3.5 Know how to write an answer:

- Simple questions need simple answers. How do you know a simple question? They're usually the ones worth 1 or 2 marks or that start with command words like "list", "give" or "state".
- More complex questions need clever answers:

Most questions with 4 or more marks for them will be level marked answers. That means that the examiner reads your answer and then decides what level it's in:

 - **Level 1:** simple answer, including all lists. Doesn't develop points.
 - **Level 2:** more complex answer, developing points to show understanding.
 - **Level 3:** complex answer, developing points further, perhaps by using case study material to back them up.

So, a 4 mark question does not need 4 points to get the marks in the answer - it needs 2 developed points to get the 4 marks. One developed point will usually get you 3 out of 4.

Q. What pollution problems are caused by the burning of fossil fuels (4 marks)

Answer A:

Burning fossil fuels, which are fuels which will run out because there are limited supplies of them, can cause problems like air pollution, the greenhouse effect, the hole in the ozone layer, erosion of buildings in cities, noise, dirt in the air and acid rain.

Level 1 - 2 marks. This is basically a list of points. Yes, they are good points (with the exception of the one about the ozone layer which has **nothing to do with fossil fuels!**), but it's just a list so it's level 1. The first bit where they explain what fossil fuels are is irrelevant as the question wants pollution problems.

Answer B:

The burning of fossil fuels emits high levels of CO₂ into the air which increases global warming. This leads to many environmental problems such as ice caps melting and sea levels rising which might flood flat coastal areas like Suffolk. This could cause major damage to people's lives and jobs.

Level 2 - 4 marks. A solid answer that develops what problems global warming might cause. Mentioning a specific area is a bonus - you can do this on paper 1 even though there aren't case study questions.

As examiners, we think that understanding how your work is going to be marked is probably **the single most important thing** you can do to get a better grade. It really helps you focus your answers and save time in the exam.

3.6 Understand about the last question:

The final question is worth most marks - on a higher tier paper its 9 marks - that's about 2 grades worth of marks! You have to do this question well.

The first thing you do is take a look at the clock. How much time do you have left? If you have plenty (15 minutes or more) then you need to go back to the start of the paper and read it through, taking a quick look at all the resources.

Why? **This paper is a story**. Remember the structure section? Every question so far has narrowed things down to the final question. So, take a look and have a think about the whole issue, not just the decision that you have to make.

Then, write a good answer with developed points in it.

- don't just copy things out of the resources - that's a level 1 answer.
- use stuff from the resources - but all of them. You can include stuff from the first resource as well as the last one.
- People very rarely use OS maps in the final question, but this gets credited by examiners.
- go beyond the resources - bring in something new. Perhaps a new point, a different point of view or an idea about management.
- make sure you develop your points - 3 developed points will likely get you 5-6 marks. Get 6 here and you've set up a good mark if you've done the other things well. Then concentrate on really developing points and bringing in new ideas to get the Level 3 marks.

A useful structure to think about for the final question is:

1. "The scheme I have chosen is a good idea because.... (developed points here)"
2. "However, it also has disadvantages... (developed points here)"
3. "If I was to go ahead with this I might... (management ideas here)"

This gives you a balanced answer - good and bad points. You'll need this to get top marks.

Remember: sometimes you don't do something because the other possibilities are worse. You might have a choice of 3 schemes and decide to do one of them because the others are bad. You should talk about the good things of the one you choose but also the reasons why you rejected the other schemes.

Of course, a balanced answer will also mention the some of the good points of the other schemes but make it clear why you opted for the one you did.

It's useful to understand how the decision making process works:

Planners need to take into account the views of a wide range of people and try to come to an overall decision that keeps as many people as possible happy. This is almost bound to cause conflict - which is why they have to really try and balance things.

Who's more important - local people, tourists, industry, rich people or the environment? Tough choices - which is good because it means there's lots to write about!!

4. Summary:

Lack of time is rarely a problem on paper 1, so keep an eye on the clock but take your time and make sure you do things well.

- Get equipped properly
- Revise key ideas and definitions
- Don't be afraid to use **brief** case studies to help support your answer
- Take care
- Make sure you're skills are up to scratch (particularly mapwork)
- Double check simple marks
- Write developed points
- Read through before the final question
- Structure your final answer carefully
- When you finish check back over your work