2.4 Demographic Change: Birth Rates, Death Rates and the Ageing Population: 30-minute Pack

AQA 7192 · about 30 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions. Use full sentences for questions worth 4 marks or more and for Question 3.

1 Outline and explain two consequences of an ageing population for the labour market in a developed country context.

(Total for Question 1 is 6 marks)

2 Describe two policy responses governments might adopt to address the pressures of an ageing population: one response concerning pensions and one concerning social care.

(Total for Question 2 is 4 marks)

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3 Using Item A and Item B and your knowledge, evaluate sociological explanations for the long-term decline in the birth rate.

(Total for Question 3 is 12 marks)

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4 Define what sociologists mean by the 'dependency ratio' when discussing an ageing population in a national context.

(Total for Question 4 is 2 marks)

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Mark scheme · 2.4 Demographic Change: Birth Rates, Death Rates and the Ageing Population: 30-minute Pack

Question 1

first consequence identified, e.g. labour shortages in some sectors as a larger share retires	**B1**
first consequence explained through a causal link, e.g. retiring cohorts reduce the supply of workers available to fill vacancies	**B1**
first consequence developed further, e.g. employers competing for fewer available workers may offer higher wages to recruit staff	**B1**
second distinct consequence identified, e.g. increasing demand for jobs in health and social care	**B1**
second consequence explained through a causal link, e.g. greater care needs increase demand for care workers	**B1**
second consequence developed further, e.g. shortages of suitably skilled care workers create a need for training or recruitment. Award three marks for each of two developed consequences; accept other valid consequences and linked explanations, without requiring a third consequence	**B1**

Answer: First, retirement can cause labour shortages: as workers retire, fewer workers may be available to fill vacancies, so employers competing for staff may offer higher wages. Second, greater care needs can increase demand for health and social care jobs. If suitably skilled workers are in short supply, this creates a need for training or recruitment.

Question 2

identifies a pension response, e.g. raising the state pension age or offering incentives for private pension saving	**B1**
describes the pension mechanism, e.g. a higher state pension age delays eligibility and may keep people contributing for longer; incentives for private pensions encourage saving for retirement income	**B1**
identifies a distinct social care response, e.g. increasing tax-funded social care provision	**B1**
describes the care mechanism, e.g. additional tax revenue can pay for community care staff and services to meet care needs; incentives for private pensions alone do not fund social care provision	**B1**

Answer: Governments can raise the state pension age, delaying eligibility for state pensions and potentially keeping people in work and contributing for longer. Separately, they can allocate additional tax revenue to social care, paying for community care staff and services to meet care needs. Incentives for private pensions are an alternative pension response that encourages saving for retirement income; they are not themselves funding for social care provision.

Question 3

Level 1 Basic statements that identify one or two reasons for falling birth rates with little or no application to the Items and limited development.	**1-3**
Level 2 Some development and organisation; outlines a couple of sociological explanations such as contraception, changing role of women, economic costs, with some use of the Items to illustrate points.	**4-6**
Level 3 Clear explanation of several sociological explanations, including application to Item A and Item B, and some evaluation, for example considering strengths, limits or evidence for each explanation.	**7-9**
Level 4 Detailed evaluation including competing perspectives and a supported conclusion; well integrated use of Item A and Item B to support and challenge explanations, addressing issues such as class, policy, cultural variation and the role of migration.	**10-12**

Indicative content:

- AO1 points: explanations for falling birth rate including increased use of contraception and family planning, changing economic role and status of women (education, employment), rising costs of childrearing and housing, later average age of first birth, cultural shifts towards individualisation and smaller families.
- AO2 application: Item A gives a crude birth rate of 9 per 1000, a median age of 45 and 22% aged 65+. This single-year snapshot describes current rates and age structure, but supplies no benchmark for calling the birth rate low or the median age high, and cannot establish a historical fertility decline or delayed childbearing. Item B identifies unpaid family care as the main source for a majority of its specified respondents; it supports conditional discussion of how care responsibilities might affect decisions about having children, not evidence that family size or care pressures have changed.
- AO3 evaluation: consider strengths and limits of each explanation, for example contraception explains control over fertility but may not explain why couples choose fewer children; the changing role of women explains delay and fewer births but class and cultural factors mean the effect varies; economic explanations highlight costs and housing but policies such as family benefits or childcare provision can mitigate these; migration can affect birth rates and age structure, but Item A gives no migrant age profile, so net migration alone cannot establish its effect on age structure or whether it offsets ageing; consider evidence quality and whether explanations are complementary rather than mutually exclusive.
- Conclusion: reach a balanced judgement, for example that no single explanation fully accounts for the decline, and that a combination of contraception, women's changing roles and economic pressures, shaped by policy context and migration patterns, best explains long-term falls in birth rates.

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Question 4

identifies dependency ratio as the relationship between dependents and working-age population, oe **B1**

development, e.g. number of children and elderly compared with those aged roughly 16-64, expressed as a ratio or percentage **B1**

Answer: The dependency ratio is the relationship between dependents and the working-age population, for example the number of children and elderly compared with those aged about 16-64, often shown as a ratio or percentage.

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