Cambridge AS & A Level · Geography 9696 · Notes

Migration AS

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Read first: Population

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What you need to know

By the end of this topic you should be able to:

1. **Explain migration as a part of population change**: a move of home that lasts at least a year (shorter moves, such as commuting or holidays, do not count), and how net migration adds to or takes from a population.
2. **Explain the causes of migration** using **push factors** and **pull factors**.
3. **Describe the processes of migration**, including **chain migration** (and stepped migration).
4. **Describe and explain patterns of migration**, including by **distance** and by **age** (and sex).
5. **Explain the role of constraints, obstacles and barriers** (such as cost and national borders).
6. **Explain rural–urban and urban–rural movements**: their causes, and their impacts on source areas and receiving/destination areas, including on population structures.
7. **Describe stepped migration** up the settlement hierarchy and **urban–urban** movements.
8. **Explain the causes and impacts of intra-urban movements** (moves within one urban area).
9. **Distinguish voluntary and forced (involuntary) international movements.**
10. **Explain the causes and patterns of international migration**, including **economic migration** and **refugee flows**, and their impacts on source areas and receiving/destination areas.
11. **Explain the management of international migration**, and know a **case study of one international migration stream**: its causes, character, scale, pattern, and impacts on source and receiving areas.

It is examined in Paper 2: a compulsory 10-mark data question (Question 2 in 2021–2025) and an optional 30-mark structured question (Question 5). Read the note on population first: migration is the second way, after natural change, that a population grows or shrinks.

Understand it

What counts as migration

Migration is the movement of a person or group to live in a new place, for **at least a year** (or permanently). The syllabus leaves out every movement of less than one year, so daily commuting, holidays and short seasonal work are **circulation**, not migration.

- **Emigration** is leaving a country and **immigration** is arriving in one; within a country we say **out-migration** and **in-migration**.
- **Net migration** (the **migration balance**) = in-migrants – out-migrants. It is positive when more people arrive than leave (a **net gain**) and negative when more leave (a **net loss**).
- **Population change** = natural change (births – deaths) + net migration. In much of Europe today, net migration is positive while natural change is negative, so migration decides whether the population grows.

The **net migration rate** compares places of different sizes, per 1000 people:

$$\text{net migration rate} = \frac{\text{in-migrants} - \text{out-migrants}}{\text{total population}} \times 1000$$

A town of 60 000 people that gains 2100 in-migrants and loses 1500 out-migrants in a year has a net migration of $2100 - 1500 = +600$, a rate of $\frac{600}{60\,000} \times 1000 = +10.0$ per 1000.

Within one country, every out-migrant from one region is an in-migrant somewhere else, so internal net migration over the whole country always adds up to **zero**; only international migration changes the national total.

Ways of classifying migration

To **classify** is to sort movements into groups by a stated **criterion**. Name the criterion, then the groups, then give an example of each.

Criterion	Groups	Example
Boundary crossed	**Internal** (within a country) or **international** (across a national border)	Farm workers moving to Lagos within Nigeria; nurses moving from the Philippines to the UK
Choice	**Voluntary** (the person decides, usually to improve their life) or **forced/involuntary** (pushed by threats to life or livelihood)	Polish workers moving to the UK after 2004; Rohingya fleeing Myanmar in 2017
Time	**Temporary** (a fixed period of a year or more, such as a work contract) or **permanent**	South Asian contract workers in the Gulf; families settling in Canada
Distance	Local, regional, national, international, intercontinental	Inner city to suburb; Mexico to the USA

Criterion	Groups	Example
Direction (internal)	**Rural–urban**, **urban–rural**, **urban–urban**, **intra-urban** (and rural–rural)	Section below
Cause	**Economic** (work), **social** (family, marriage, education), **political** (war, persecution), **environmental** (disaster, drought, rising sea level)	Drought in the Sahel; Syrians fleeing war
Who moves	Individual, family, or mass movement; **chain migration** (following contacts)	Section below
Legal status	Documented (legal) or undocumented (irregular)	Visa holders; people smuggled across the Mediterranean

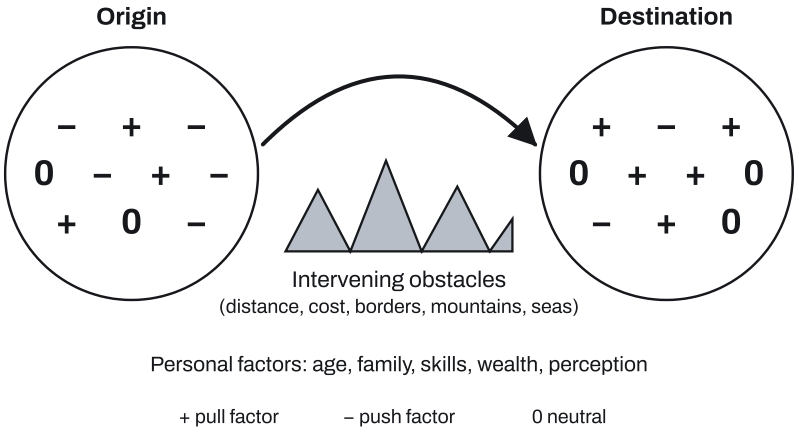
Real migrants often fit several groups at once, and the line between voluntary and forced is blurred: a farmer leaving after three failed harvests chooses to go, but has little real choice.

Causes: push factors, pull factors and the decision to move

A **push factor** is something about the **place of origin** that makes people want to leave. A **pull factor** is something about the **destination** that attracts them. Sort them into four groups so that answers cover a range.

	Push factors (origin)	Pull factors (destination)
Economic	Unemployment and **underemployment**; low pay; farm work lost to **mechanisation** or to large commercial farms buying up land; crop failure and debt; few kinds of job	More jobs and a wider range of them; higher wages; chance to send **remittances** home; better working conditions
Social	Poor schools, clinics, water, electricity and housing; few services or leisure facilities; few marriage partners; discrimination	Education and universities; health care; better housing and services; family and friends already there; freedom from strict social customs
Political	War and civil unrest; persecution for religion, ethnicity or politics; corruption; forced clearance of homes	Safety and stability; political and religious freedom; human rights; welcoming policies (work visas, freedom of movement)
Environmental	Drought, floods, earthquakes and cyclones; soil erosion and desertification; rising sea levels; pollution; harsh climate	Pleasant climate; clean, green surroundings; fewer hazards

How the factors work together. People rarely move for one reason. The American geographer **Everett Lee** (1966) suggested that each person weighs four sets of factors: those at the **origin**, those at the **destination**, the **intervening obstacles** between them, and **personal factors**.



- Every place has **pluses, minuses and zeros**. Even a poor village has pluses that hold people (family, land, a familiar culture), and even a rich city has minuses (high rents, crime, being a stranger).
- A person moves only if the **balance** of minuses at home and pluses at the destination is big enough to **overcome the obstacles**.
- **Personal factors** decide how each person weighs them: a 22-year-old with no children sees the city's pluses very differently from a 50-year-old farmer with land and grandchildren.
- Decisions depend on **perception**, not facts: people move on what they believe about a place, from relatives' stories, social media or television, and may be disappointed ("bright lights" of the city).
- The balance differs by type of migration: economic migrants are drawn mainly by pulls; refugees are driven mainly by pushes, often so strong that they would move anywhere safe.
- **Expected income** (the Todaro model): rural people may move even when urban jobs are scarce, because the chance of a much higher city wage, multiplied by the chance of getting it, is still worth more than staying on a farm.

Enabling factors make migration easier without being a reason to move. They explain why migration **increases** over time, or as a country develops:

- cheaper, faster **transport** (buses, budget airlines) and more people owning cars;
- **information**: mobile phones, the internet and social media show jobs, routes and housing before people leave, and let them keep in touch afterwards;
- **higher incomes** and **education**, so people can afford to move and have skills that are wanted elsewhere;
- weaker **family ties** and fewer cultural limits on moving, for women especially; smaller families make moving easier;
- **government policy**: freedom of movement (the EU's Schengen area), work visas, decentralisation, or programmes that move people;
- **networks**: contacts already at the destination (chain migration);
- **growing inequality** between rich and poor countries, and more conflict and climate-related disaster, which add to the pushes.

The American geographer **Wilbur Zelinsky** (1971) linked this to development in his **mobility transition**: as a country develops, internal migration rises sharply (first rural–urban, then urban–urban and intra-urban), and in the most developed countries much movement is replaced by commuting and working online.

Patterns of migration by distance

Distance decay: the number of migrants falls as the distance from their destination grows. In a survey of 500 migrants arriving in a city of an MIC:

Distance moved (km)	0–50	51–100	101–200	201–400	Over 400
Migrants	210	120	80	50	40
% of migrants	42	24	16	10	8

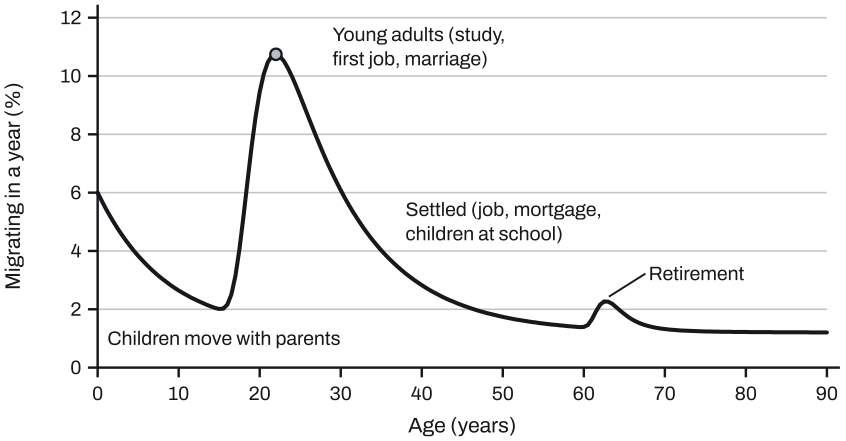
Two-thirds (66%) came less than 100 km. Short moves cost less, carry less risk, keep people close to family, and people know more about nearby places. In 1885 **Ernst Ravenstein** summed up such patterns in his "laws of migration": most migrants move only a short distance; those who go further usually head for a large city; migration often happens in steps; each flow produces a smaller **counter-flow** back; rural people move more than urban people; and young adults move most.

Distance is not the whole story:

- **Intervening opportunities** (Samuel Stouffer, 1940): the number of migrants depends less on distance than on how many chances there are along the way. A migrant may stop at a nearer city that offers work.
- **Cost and transport** matter more than kilometres: a cheap flight from London to Kraków is "nearer" than a two-day bus journey across one region of Nigeria.
- **Barriers and networks**: a closed border makes a short move impossible, and a community abroad can make a long move easy (Filipino workers go as far as the Gulf and Canada).
- **Refugees** mostly move a short way, to a **neighbouring country**, because they leave suddenly, on foot or by road, with little money and hope to return; about two-thirds of the world's refugees live in a country next to their own.

Patterns of migration by age and sex

Migration is **selective**: some groups move far more than others, and age is the strongest influence.



- **Young adults (about 18–30)** move most. They have few ties (no children, no house, no long-held job), they are leaving home to study, find a first job or marry, they are healthy and more willing to take risks, and they have the longest working life ahead in which to gain from the move. Most rural–urban and international economic migrants are young adults.
- **Children** move with their parents, so the rate is high for babies and falls through the school years, when parents avoid moving.
- **Settled adults (40s and 50s)** move least: jobs, mortgages, children at school and caring for parents hold them.
- **Around retirement** there is a small rise: people no longer tied to a workplace move to the coast, the countryside or abroad for a pleasant climate and cheaper housing (British retirees to Spain's Costa del Sol).
- **Old age**: a few move to be near their children or into care.

The **life-cycle model** links each stage to a type of move, and explains most intra-urban migration: young single adults rent near the city centre, close to work and nightlife; couples with young children move out to the suburbs for bigger houses, gardens and schools; older couples whose children have left may move to smaller homes or out of the city; retirees move to rural or coastal areas.

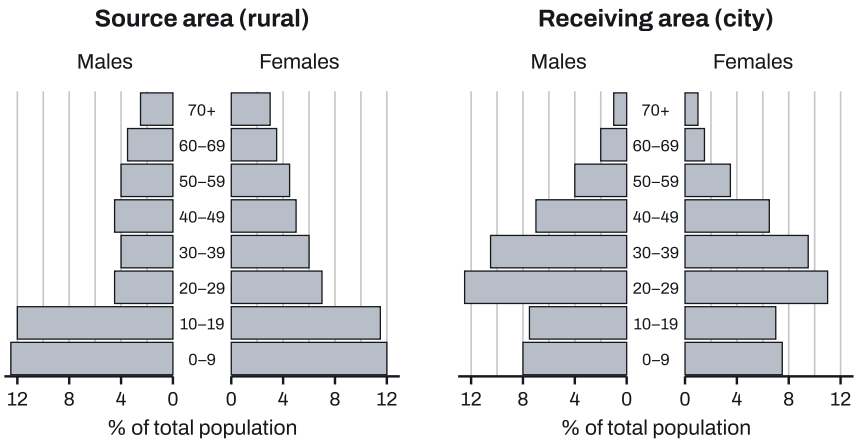
Sex. Which sex moves more depends on the flow:

- **Men** dominate long-distance labour migration to mines, building sites and oil fields (most migrant workers in Qatar and the United Arab Emirates are men), and in many LICs and MICs, custom expects men to earn and women to stay with children and elderly parents; in some places women may not travel alone.
- **Women** dominate some flows: domestic work and nursing abroad (from the Philippines and Indonesia), work in clothing factories (Dhaka, Bangladesh), and **marriage migration** where a wife moves to her husband's family home (marriage is the leading reason women in India change residence).
- **Refugee** flows are more mixed, with many women, children and elderly people; adult men are often fewer, because they stay to fight, are conscripted or detained, stay to protect land and property, or left earlier to find a safe place for the family.

Who migrates also differs by origin. Migrants from HICs are more often older, wealthier, skilled professionals, students or retirees who move by choice; migrants from LICs are more often young, less wealthy, seeking any work, or forced to move.

Impacts on population structure

Because migrants are young adults, and often mostly of one sex, migration reshapes the **age/sex structure** of both areas.



Source areas (losing young adults):

- a **notch** at ages 20–39, so the population is **ageing**: the share of elderly people rises and the median age goes up;
- **fewer births**, because the people of childbearing age have gone, so the base narrows later and natural change can become negative;
- a **sex imbalance** if mainly men leave (villages of women, children and elderly people in rural Nepal or Lesotho) or mainly women;
- a high **dependency ratio**, as the working-age group shrinks.

Receiving areas (gaining young adults):

- a **bulge** at ages 20–39, a younger structure with a **lower dependency ratio**;
- **more births** a few years later, as migrants start families, so the base widens;
- more men than women, or the reverse, depending on who arrives (Gulf cities have far more men);
- if the migrants are **retirees**, the opposite: a wider top and an **ageing** structure (coastal Spain, Florida in the USA).

The overall effect depends on the structure that was there before, who arrives, who leaves at the same time, and whether migrants bring families. A **labelled pyramid** in an answer is credited.

Constraints, obstacles and barriers

These three words are used in the syllabus and the questions, with different meanings:

- An **obstacle** is something in the way that must be **overcome**: it makes migration harder, but people who can afford or risk it get past. Physical obstacles: mountains, deserts, seas, rivers, long distances, dangerous journeys. Human obstacles: language, the cost of travel.
- A **constraint limits or slows** migration without stopping it: cost, lack of money or transport, little information, family responsibilities, age and health, visa and entry conditions such as points systems and quotas, controls on internal movement (China's household registration system).
- A **barrier blocks** movement altogether, for some people at least: a closed or fortified border, a wall, a legal ban on entry, a war zone.

The same thing can be any of them for different people: a visa requirement is a constraint for a skilled worker who can apply, and a barrier for an unskilled worker who cannot. Many questions ask for **physical** (natural) and **human** (economic, social, political) ones separately.

Physical	Human
Mountain ranges (the Himalayas), deserts (the Sahara, crossed by migrants heading for Libya), seas (the Mediterranean, where thousands of migrants have drowned since 2014), wide rivers, extreme heat or cold, long distances	Cost of the journey and of smugglers; lack of transport; national borders, visas, quotas and points systems; walls and fences (along much of the USA–Mexico border); language; family ties; age and health; lack of information; internal controls

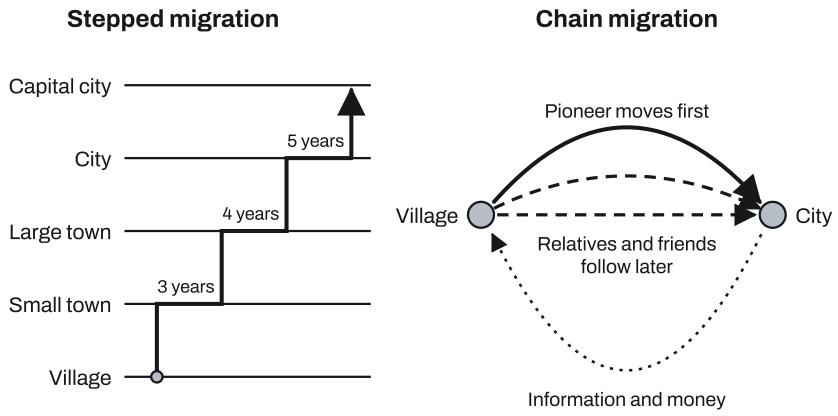
For refugees, barriers matter in a special way: they leave in a hurry, often on foot, so physical obstacles and the **dangers of the journey** (heat, cold, drowning, violence, exploitation by smugglers and traffickers) are severe, and the **legal barriers** of destination countries (border closures, strict asylum rules) push them to stay near home.

Chain migration and stepped migration

Chain migration happens when migrants follow others they know. A **pioneer** moves first, finds work and housing, then sends back information, money and sometimes tickets; relatives, friends and neighbours follow along the same route to the same destination, often to the same street. Over time a whole community from one village can grow up in one district abroad, such as people from Sylhet in Bangladesh in east London.

- **Advantages for migrants**: they know what to expect; someone meets them, houses them and helps them find work; the risk and cost are lower; a familiar language, food, religion and support network make settling easier.
- **Disadvantages**: migrants may stay in their own community and integrate less; the source village can lose most of its young adults.

Stepped migration happens when a migrant moves **in stages up the settlement hierarchy**: from a village to a small town, later to a larger town, and finally to a large city or the capital. At each step the migrant gains money, skills, experience of urban life and information about the next place.



	Chain migration	Stepped migration
Route	Follows an existing route to where contacts live	May be a new route; the migrant is often a pioneer
Number of moves	Usually **one** move, straight to the destination	**Several** moves, with stays of months or years at each
Information	Well informed in advance by relatives and friends	Learns at each step about the next
Main driver	Social networks (family, friends, people from the same place)	Building up money, skills and confidence
Destination	Where the network is, at any level of the hierarchy	Usually ends at the top, a large city
Similarities	Both happen within countries and between them; both are mainly voluntary and economic; both concentrate migrants in large cities over time	

Why stepped migration is less common internationally: international migrants often go straight to the main city of the destination country (where they land, where jobs and contacts are, the place they have heard of), they know few smaller places, visas tie them to one employer or city, and the cost and paperwork of crossing a border make it a single, planned move.

Advantages and disadvantages of stepped migration for the migrant: it is less of a shock and less risky than one big move, the migrant earns and learns at each step, and can turn back; but it takes years, each move has costs, and the migrant may get stuck at a lower step.

Internal migration 1: rural–urban migration in LICs and MICs

Rural–urban migration is the main cause of **urbanisation** in LICs and MICs, with natural increase in the cities. China's **household registration system** (*hukou*), set up in 1958, long tied people to their home area, yet China had nearly 300 million rural migrant workers in 2023, most of them working away from their home area, many in coastal cities such as Shenzhen, which grew to over 17 million people by 2020. In Brazil, millions moved from the drought-prone North-East to São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro.

Push factors from rural areas: underemployment and low farm incomes; mechanisation and land bought up for commercial farms; small, divided plots; drought, floods and crop failure; debt; poor water supply, electricity, schools and clinics; few jobs other than farming; conflict. A **negative multiplier** follows: as people leave, shops, schools and clinics lose the **threshold population** they need, close, and the area gets even less investment, so more leave.

Pull factors of urban areas: more and better-paid jobs, in factories, services and the **informal sector**; schools, universities and hospitals; piped water and electricity; more housing choices; transport links; the excitement and freedom of city life (escaping strict village customs); family already there.

Impacts on rural (source) areas

Negative	Positive
Loss of young, often male, workers, so farm output may fall and land is left idle	Fewer people to feed; more land and resources per person
Ageing population; fewer births; more elderly people without care	Less underemployment; wages for the remaining workers may rise
Families split up; women run farms and households alone	**Remittances** pay for food, school fees, better houses, seed and machinery
Services close as threshold populations fall; neglect by government	Returning migrants bring new skills, ideas and contacts
Loss of the most enterprising and educated people	Women may gain more decision-making power and new skills

Impacts on urban (receiving) areas

Problems	Benefits
Housing shortage and the growth of **informal settlements** (shanty towns): Dharavi in Mumbai holds hundreds of thousands of people on about 2 km^2	A large supply of cheap labour for factories, building and services, attracting investment
Pressure on schools, clinics, water, sanitation, electricity and transport	New skills and enterprise; many small businesses
Unemployment and underemployment; growth of the informal sector	Cultural diversity and a younger population
Congestion and pollution; rising rents and prices	Over time migrants and their children become healthier and better educated and add to economic growth
Tension between established residents and newcomers	Self-help housing improvement and government upgrading can ease the problems (favela upgrading in Rio de Janeiro)

How serious the impacts are depends on the **number** of migrants and how fast they arrive, the **time** since they arrived (problems are worst at first), the **place** (a large, well-run city copes better than a small one), and **governance** (investment in housing and services).

Internal migration 2: urban–rural migration in HICs (counter-urbanisation)

Counter-urbanisation is the movement of people from large cities to smaller towns, villages and rural areas. It is common in HICs, and rose during and after the COVID-19 pandemic as more people worked from home.

Push factors from cities: high house prices and rents; small homes with little outdoor space; congestion, noise and air pollution; crime and fear of crime; overcrowded schools; urban redevelopment that clears housing; jobs moving out to the edge of the city.

Pull factors of rural areas: cheaper, larger houses with gardens; a quieter, cleaner, greener environment; outdoor recreation; lower crime; a sense of community; smaller schools; better roads, rail and **broadband**, so people can commute or **work from home**; jobs in tourism and leisure; retirement to an attractive area; new housing estates and government investment.

Example: Cornwall, UK. Cornwall, a rural county in the far south-west of England, four to five hours by train from London, has long drawn **retirees** (for its coast, mild climate and quiet villages) and **second-home owners** from London and the South East. After the COVID-19 lockdowns of 2020–2021, many **home-workers** joined them, because fast broadband let them keep city jobs while living by the sea. Few are daily **commuters**: it is too far from most large cities.

Not all rural areas in HICs gain: remote areas far from cities still **lose** young people to the cities for jobs, higher education, services, and marriage partners (inland Spain, where some provinces now have fewer than 10 people per km², and northern Norway and Japan). It is the rural areas **within reach of cities**, or with attractive scenery, that grow.

Impacts on rural (receiving) areas

Disadvantages	Advantages
House prices rise, so young local people are priced out; **second homes** stand empty for much of the year (Cornwall in the UK)	New residents keep shops, pubs, schools and bus services open by adding customers
Pressure to build on **greenfield** land; planning disputes	Old and empty buildings are renovated
Commuters work, shop and spend in the town, so village services still close (dormitory villages)	New businesses, especially by people working from home; more local tax income
Conflict between newcomers and long-standing residents; loss of community	Newcomers may join and lead community groups
Retirees age the population; village schools close for lack of children	Young families who move in support schools

Disadvantages	Advantages
More traffic on narrow roads; pressure on water, sewers and health services	

The impact depends on **who** moves: commuters, home-workers, retirees and second-home owners each bring different advantages and disadvantages.

Cornwall again. In coastal towns such as St Ives, so many homes became second homes and holiday lets that local workers on tourism wages could no longer afford to buy or rent, and some streets stand dark all winter. In a 2016 local referendum, 83% of St Ives voters backed a rule that new-build homes may be sold only as a **main residence**. Yet the same newcomers keep cafés, shops and building firms in business, renovate old cottages, and home-workers spend their city salaries locally all year, unlike second-home owners. Retirees age the population, while home-workers with young families help keep village schools open. So the impact depends on who arrives: home-workers bring the most advantages, second-home owners the most disadvantages.

Impacts on the cities they leave: the urban population becomes younger and poorer on average if the better-off families and retirees leave; the tax base shrinks; inner areas may decline and empty (Detroit, USA, fell from about 1.85 million people in 1950 to about 640 000 in 2020). Many cities have since gained through **re-urbanisation**, as young adults move back into renewed central areas.

Internal migration 3: urban–urban and intra-urban migration

Urban–urban migration is a move from one town or city to another (not commuting). Causes: a new job, job transfer or promotion; a company relocating its offices; university; joining a partner or family; cheaper housing in another city; a better environment (a coastal city); retiring; moving up the urban hierarchy (stepped migration). In the USA, millions have moved from expensive cities in California to cheaper cities in Texas, such as Austin; in the UK, many young adults move from London to Bristol or Manchester. It has **increased** because of better transport, higher incomes and education, remote and flexible working, more frequent career changes, weaker family ties, government **decentralisation** of offices, and chain migration.

Intra-urban migration is a change of home **within the same urban area**. Causes:

- **Life cycle**: young adults to rented flats near the centre; families to the suburbs; older people to smaller homes.
- **Economic**: a new job in another part of the city; a rise in income (moving up to a better area) or a fall (moving to a cheaper one); rising rents.
- **Social**: to live near people of the same culture, ethnicity or religion; to move away from crime; to be near family, schools or leisure.
- **Political and planning**: slum clearance and **resettlement** of squatter settlements; urban renewal; land-use zoning; **gentrification**, which raises rents and pushes poorer residents out.
- **Environmental**: to escape pollution or flood risk; to find open space.

It **increases** as a country develops because more people own cars and public transport improves, so they can live further from work; incomes and housing choices rise; more people live alone (single-person households) and populations age; and governments rehouse residents of informal settlements (redevelopment schemes in Dharavi, Mumbai, and in the favelas of Rio de Janeiro).

Impacts of intra-urban migration:

- **Residential segregation**: groups cluster by income or ethnicity, forming wealthy suburbs, gated communities and ethnic districts.
- **Suburbanisation**: families move out, the city sprawls, and car use rises.
- **Inner-city decline** where the better-off leave, with empty housing and closed shops; **gentrification** and **re-urbanisation** where they return (London's Docklands).
- Changes in the demand for schools, housing and services in each district.

Why international migrants often live in inner cities: cheap rented housing (the older housing around the CBD); jobs nearby in hospitality, cleaning and light industry; the arrival point (the main railway station or airport link); a community of people from the same country, with shops, places of worship and support (chain migration); access to services; and a range of shared and short-term accommodation.

International migration: voluntary and forced

About **304 million** people, 3.7% of the world's population, were living outside their country of birth in 2024, up from 153 million in 1990 (UN figures). The share is highest in some HICs: in the United Arab Emirates about 88% of residents are foreign nationals; in Australia, Canada and New Zealand more than a fifth of people were born abroad. Many LICs and MICs have very low shares, but some also receive many migrants, such as Türkiye and Colombia, which host millions of refugees from neighbouring countries.

Patterns: the world's largest flows go from LICs and MICs to HICs (Mexico and Central America to the USA; North Africa, Eastern Europe and Syria to the EU; South Asia to the Gulf states), but almost as many people move **between** LICs and MICs (Venezuelans to Colombia; Burkina Faso to Côte d'Ivoire). People mostly move to **neighbouring** countries, and to countries with which they share a **language**, a **colonial link** or an existing community.

Voluntary migration is movement by a person's own choice, usually to improve their life; **economic migrants** move voluntarily for work or a better standard of living, for a year or more.

Forced (involuntary) migration is movement under threat to life or livelihood, with little or no choice. Causes:

- **political**: war and civil war (Syria from 2011, Ukraine from 2022, Sudan from 2023), persecution for religion, ethnicity or political views (the Rohingya of Myanmar, about 740 000 of whom fled to Bangladesh from August 2017), government policy (expulsions, dams and development projects that clear land);
- **environmental**: earthquakes, floods, tropical cyclones, drought and famine, **rising sea levels** (low-lying Pacific islands; Australia agreed in 2023 to take up to 280 people a year from Tuvalu);
- **economic collapse**: hyperinflation and food shortages (more than 7 million people left Venezuela after 2015);

- **social**: religious or ethnic violence; outbreaks of disease (people fleeing Ebola in West Africa in 2014).

Key terms:

- A **refugee** is a person forced to leave their **own country** (crossing an international border) because of war, persecution, violence or disaster, who fears for their life if they return.
- An **internally displaced person (IDP)** is forced from home but stays **within** their own country.
- An **asylum seeker** has applied for protection as a refugee in another country and is waiting for a decision.

More than **120 million** people were forcibly displaced by the end of 2024, about double the number ten years earlier; over 40 million of them were refugees, and most of the rest were IDPs. About 70% of refugees are hosted in LICs and MICs, mostly next door to the country they fled.

Economic migration flows and refugee flows compared

	Economic migration flows	Refugee flows
Choice and timing	Voluntary, planned; steady over years	Forced, sudden; huge numbers in weeks when a crisis breaks
Main causes	Pull factors (jobs, wages)	Push factors (war, persecution, disaster)
Who moves	Mostly young adults of working age, often men, often with skills	Whole families and every age: many women, children and elderly people
Destination	Chosen, often far away, where jobs and contacts are	The nearest safe place, usually a neighbouring country, often a camp
Documents and money	Visas, savings, a planned journey	Often no documents and little money; dangerous routes
Duration	Often permanent, or a fixed contract	Hope to return, but many stay for years (camps can last decades)
Both	Cross international borders; mostly go to neighbouring or nearby countries; can be large; depend on networks and on routes	

Characteristics of refugee camps: rows of tents or simple shelters on cleared land, often behind fences; shared water points, toilets and food distribution run by UNHCR and aid agencies; crowding and poor sanitation, so disease spreads easily; few jobs and little schooling. They are a **short-term solution** only: they give no permanent housing, work, citizenship or future; they depend on aid that may be cut; people lose skills and hope; tension with local people grows; yet many camps last for decades (Kutupalong in Bangladesh, home to most of the Rohingya, is among the largest in the world). Lasting solutions are return home, settling in the host country, or resettlement in a third country.

Why refugee flows may increase in the future: climate change (more droughts, floods, cyclones, and sea-level rise); more conflict over water, land and resources; failing states and economic collapse; disease outbreaks; and phones and the internet that help people find routes.

Why international migration has increased

- **Global inequality**: wages in HICs can be many times those in LICs, and the gap in health care, education and safety stays wide.
- **Cheaper, faster transport** and better **information** (internet, social media, mobile money for sending remittances).
- **Labour shortages** in HICs and the Gulf, especially of care workers, nurses, builders and seasonal farm workers, as their populations age; governments recruit abroad.
- **Policies** that open borders: freedom of movement within the EU (after 2004, about 1 million Poles were living in the UK by 2017); skilled worker visas; student visas.
- **Networks** and chain migration from earlier migrants.
- **More forced migration**, from war (Syria, Ukraine, Sudan) and climate disasters.
- **Education** and the greater independence of women.
- The **COVID-19** pandemic cut migration in 2020–2021, so numbers jumped back afterwards.

Impacts of international migration

On source areas (countries of origin)

	Positive	Negative
Economic	**Remittances**: about 685 billion US dollars went to LICs and MICs in 2024, more than foreign aid; they pay for food, school fees, housing and small businesses (the Philippines received about 37 billion US dollars in 2023, around 8% of its GDP). Less unemployment and underemployment. Returning migrants bring skills, savings and business ideas	Loss of workers, especially young and skilled ones (**brain drain**): doctors and nurses from Ghana, Zimbabwe and the Philippines; the money spent educating them is lost; lower tax revenue and output; less investment and innovation; dependence on remittances, which can stop in a recession
Social	Less pressure on schools, clinics, housing and land; women may take on new roles	Ageing; fewer births; sex imbalance; families split up, children raised by grandparents; services close as thresholds fall
Political	Diaspora communities lobby for their home country; returning migrants bring new ideas	Loss of voters and future leaders; the cost to governments of filling gaps; refugees' flight can empty whole regions

	Positive	Negative
Environmental	Less pressure on overused land	Farmland, terraces and irrigation channels abandoned and eroded when no one maintains them

On receiving/destination areas

	Positive	Negative
Economic	More workers, filling **labour shortages** in farming, building, health care and hospitality; skilled workers trained at another country's expense; migrants often accept lower wages and flexible work; they pay taxes and spend money, so demand and businesses grow (a **multiplier effect**); migrants set up new businesses and bring innovation	Spending on housing, language classes and services, especially for refugees, who may not be allowed to work at first; wages may be held down for low-paid local workers; money leaves as remittances
Social	A younger population and a **lower dependency ratio**, easing ageing; cultural diversity (food, music, festivals); more pupils keep schools open	Pressure on housing, schools and clinics where migrants concentrate; language barriers; tension, discrimination and segregation if migrants are not integrated
Political	New voters; more investment; migrant workers support the welfare state	Anti-immigration parties and protests; disputes over border policy
Environmental	New skills and ideas in farming and land management	More housing and infrastructure built on greenfield land; refugee camps clear forest for shelter and fuel (around Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh)

Impacts **change over time**: costs come first (housing, services, language), benefits come later as migrants find work, learn the language and their children are educated; most HICs' economies gain overall from migration in the long run. They also depend on the **number** and **type** of migrants (skilled workers on visas or refugees), **where** they settle, and whether the host is rich or poor: Lebanon, an MIC of about 5.5 million people, hosted about 1.5 million Syrians (government estimate), roughly one person in four, and its schools, water supply and electricity were overwhelmed; Germany, a much richer country of 84 million, took in about 890 000 asylum seekers in 2015 alone and had far more money to house them.

Managing migration

Why governments control international migration:

- to protect jobs and wages for their own citizens, and public services and housing from being overwhelmed;
- to fill **skill and labour shortages** and balance an **ageing** population (selecting the migrants they want);

- security: to keep out criminals and terrorists, and to fight people smuggling and trafficking;
- the cost of supporting refugees and asylum seekers (housing, food, health care);
- to reduce friction with the existing population and protect cultures; and because voters demand it.

How they do it:

- **Selective entry**: **points-based systems** that favour skills, education, language and age (Canada since 1967, Australia); work and student **visas**; employer sponsorship; **quotas**; seasonal worker schemes; "green cards" in the USA.
- **Hard borders**: fences, walls and patrols (along much of the 3100 km USA–Mexico border; Hungary's fence of 2015); offshore processing of asylum seekers (Australia in Nauru and Papua New Guinea since 2012–2013).
- **Agreements**: the EU–Turkey deal of March 2016, under which Türkiye took back migrants who had crossed to the Greek islands; free movement zones (the EU's Schengen area); return agreements.
- **Encouraging migration**: Japan's new skilled worker visas from 2019; Gulf states' contract labour systems; Germany's skilled immigration law; the EU's temporary protection for Ukrainians from March 2022.
- **Indirect**: hostile rhetoric, limits on benefits or the right to work, to discourage arrivals.

Why it is difficult to manage:

- **Geography**: long land borders and coastlines are hard to patrol (Greece's many islands, a few kilometres from Türkiye, received over 850 000 sea arrivals in 2015); bordering a country at war brings sudden flows (Jordan, Lebanon and Türkiye next to Syria; Colombia next to Venezuela).
- **Irregular migration**: people smuggling, forged papers, and people who **overstay** their visas.
- **Scale and speed** of refugee flows, and the **international law** (the 1951 Refugee Convention) that says refugees may not be sent back to danger.
- **Economic tension**: businesses want migrant labour while voters want fewer migrants.
- **Political disagreement**, within countries and between them (EU members disagree over sharing asylum seekers).
- **Humanitarian and ethical** pressures, and family reunion rights.

Some countries find it **easier**: an island far from conflict, such as Australia, can control arrivals far more tightly than Greece or Italy, which lie close to the routes from Africa and the Middle East.

Internal migration is managed too, but less often: governments try to **slow rural–urban migration** (China's *hukou* system; rural development to reduce pushes) or to **move people** to less crowded regions (Indonesia's transmigration programme moved millions from Java to other islands; Brazil built a new capital, Brasília, in 1960 to draw people inland). They do so to stop cities overloading, to spread development, to develop resources or for security. It is hard: freedom of movement is a right in most countries; there is little data on who moves; pull factors of cities and perceptions of the "bright lights" are hard to change; it costs a lot; corruption and lack of funds hold back rural investment; and it is not always easy to say where rural ends and urban begins. Managing **urban–rural** migration in HICs uses **planning controls** (green belts, limits on second

homes, as in parts of Wales and Cornwall), local taxes, housing policy, transport and broadband provision, and the location of services; but it goes against freedom of choice and the market, and some governments welcome it because it eases pressure on cities.

Case study: Mexico to the USA

The syllabus requires one **international migration stream** (a flow with a common origin and destination): its **causes, character, scale, pattern and impacts on source and receiving areas**. Learn one in detail.

Scale: about 11 million Mexican-born people live in the USA (2022), down from a peak of almost 13 million in 2007, the largest single group of immigrants in the country; about 4 million of them are undocumented.

Pattern: traditionally from the rural states of west-central Mexico (Jalisco, Michoacán, Guanajuato, Zacatecas), now from all over Mexico, across a border about 3100 km long, to California and Texas (which hold more than half of all Mexican immigrants), and increasingly to other states such as Illinois (Chicago), Georgia and North Carolina. Chain migration links particular Mexican villages with particular US towns.

Causes:

- **Economic push and pull**: US wages are several times Mexican wages for similar work; unemployment and underemployment in rural Mexico; cheap US maize imports after the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) of 1994 cut the income of Mexico's small maize farmers. US farms, building firms, meat packers, hotels and restaurants want labour.
- **History and policy**: the US **Bracero programme** (1942–1964) recruited millions of Mexican farm workers; the 1986 amnesty gave legal status to about 3 million undocumented migrants, many of them Mexican, who then brought families.
- **Social**: family already in the USA; better schools and health care.
- **Political**: drug-cartel violence in parts of Mexico since 2006.
- **Enabling**: a shared land border and roads; networks of contacts.

Character: for decades mostly young men from rural areas, working in farming and construction, often moving back and forth; now older, more often women and families, more settled, more urban and better educated. Since 2009 the flow has **slowed and reversed**: between 2009 and 2014 more Mexicans left the USA than arrived, because of the US recession, tighter border enforcement, falling Mexican birth rates and a stronger Mexican economy. Most people stopped at the border in recent years have come from Central America, Venezuela and further afield, passing through Mexico.

Impacts on Mexico (source):

- **Positive**: remittances of over 60 billion US dollars a year (2023–2024), paying for food, housing, schools and small businesses; the "3×1" programme matched migrants' donations with government money for village roads, water and churches; less unemployment.
- **Negative**: some villages lost most of their young men, leaving women, children and elderly people, ageing and fewer births; farms abandoned; families split; dependence on remittances; loss of enterprising young workers.

Impacts on the USA (receiving):

- **Positive**: labour for farming (most hired crop farm workers were born in Mexico), building, food processing and services, often at low wages; spending and taxes; a younger workforce; Mexican food, music, festivals and the Spanish language enrich US culture; trade links.
- **Negative**: costs of schooling and health care in border states; some low-paid US workers face wage competition; exploitation of undocumented workers; political conflict over illegal immigration and the border wall; deaths in the desert crossing.

Judgement: both sides have gained economically (labour for the USA, remittances for Mexico), but the costs fall unevenly: on the Mexican villages that lost their young people, on low-paid workers, and on the migrants themselves.

Key facts and formulas

There is no formula list in Paper 2, so learn all of these.

Formula	Status
Net migration = in-migrants – out-migrants (positive = net gain, negative = net loss)	Learn it
Net migration rate (per 1000) $= \frac{\text{in-migrants} - \text{out-migrants}}{\text{total population}} \times 1000$	Learn it
Population change = natural change (births – deaths) + net migration	Learn it
Percentage of a total = part ÷ total × 100	Learn it
Mean of yearly values = sum of the values (keeping their + and – signs) ÷ number of years	Learn it
Percentage change = (new – old) ÷ old × 100 (negative for a fall)	Learn it
Males per 100 females (sex ratio) = males ÷ females × 100	Learn it

Term and meaning	Status
Migration: the movement of a person to live in a new place for at least a year	Learn it
Circulation: short-term movement of less than a year, such as commuting or seasonal work; not migration	Learn it
Internal migration: migration within one country	Learn it
International migration: migration across a national border	Learn it
Voluntary migration: movement of a person by their own choice, for at least a year	Learn it

Term and meaning	Status
Forced (involuntary) migration: movement under threat to life or livelihood (war, persecution, disaster), with no real choice	Learn it
Economic migrant: a person who moves voluntarily for work or a better standard of living, for a year or more	Learn it
Refugee: a person forced to leave their own country because of war, persecution or disaster, who fears for their life if they return	Learn it
Internally displaced person (IDP): a person forced from home who stays within their own country	Learn it
Asylum seeker: a person who has applied for protection as a refugee and is waiting for a decision	Learn it
Push factor: a feature of the place of origin that makes people want to leave	Learn it
Pull factor: a feature of the destination that attracts people to it	Learn it
Intervening obstacle: something between origin and destination that makes migration harder	Learn it
Constraint: a factor that limits or slows migration without stopping it (cost, visas, family ties)	Learn it
Barrier: a factor that blocks migration (a closed border, a wall, a ban)	Learn it
Chain migration: migrants follow earlier migrants they know, from the same place, along the same route	Learn it
Stepped migration: migration in stages up the settlement hierarchy, from village to town to city	Learn it
Migration stream: a flow of migrants from a common area of origin to a common destination over a period	Learn it
Rural–urban migration: movement from the countryside to towns and cities	Learn it
Counter-urbanisation (urban–rural migration): movement from large cities to smaller towns, villages and rural areas	Learn it
Urban–urban migration: movement from one town or city to another	Learn it
Intra-urban migration: movement from one home to another within the same urban area	Learn it

Term and meaning	Status
Remittances: money sent home by migrants to their families	Learn it
Brain drain: the loss of skilled and educated people by emigration	Learn it
Distance decay: the number of migrants falls as the distance moved increases	Learn it
Life-cycle model: people move as their stage of life changes (leaving home, having children, retiring)	Learn it

How to do it

We have tagged 60 questions for this topic (2021–2025, all from Paper 2), 54 different (Papers 22 and 23 were the same in June 2022, 2023 and 2024). Every one is a multi-part Question 2 or Question 5, so all 60 mix types and the counts add up to 190.

Question type	Questions
Explain the causes of a migration flow	45
Essay (15 marks): assess a claim about migration	30
Describe or compare a pattern or trend in a figure	18
Explain the impacts of migration on source or receiving areas	17
Explain how age and sex shape migration and population structure	16
Read a value off a figure or table	16
Describe, compare or classify types and processes of migration	14
Explain constraints, obstacles and barriers	10
Calculate from migration data	10
Define a migration term	10
Explain why governments control or manage migration	4

Short parts (2–5 marks) give 1 mark for a simple point and 2 for a developed one (with detail or an example); "suggest two reasons" parts give 1 mark each. The 7-mark (a) parts give 1–2 marks a point, up to 7. The 8-mark (b) parts are marked in three levels (Level 3, 6–8 marks), with a maximum of 4 without valid examples, and the 15-mark (c) essays in four (Level 4, 12–15 marks), with a maximum of 6 without examples.

1. Explain the causes of a migration flow (45 questions)

Every flow is asked: rural–urban in LICs/MICs (rural pushes, urban pulls), urban–rural in HICs (why rural populations grow), rural out-migration in HICs, urban–urban, intra-urban, international (pulls to HICs, why some countries attract many, forced causes, your case study), and refugees.

1. **Identify the flow** in the question and stay on it: "intra-urban" means within one city, not between cities; "internal" means within a country; "in HICs" or "in LICs/MICs" sets the context. Examiners report many answers lost for writing about the wrong flow.
2. **Push or pull?** Push factors belong to the place people leave, pull factors to the place they go. Don't give a **reflexive pair** (rural unemployment as a push and urban jobs as a pull) as two reasons: it counts once.
3. **Cover a range**: economic, social, political, environmental.
4. **Develop each factor**: say what it is, then how it makes people move: "Mechanisation of farms means one tractor does the work of many labourers **(1)**, so landless workers lose their jobs and move to the city to find work **(1)**." One word ("jobs", "peaceful") is not enough.
5. **Examples** in 8-mark parts: named places, with detail (São Paulo, Shenzhen, Mumbai; the Cotswolds; Mexico to the USA). Without them the maximum is 4.

"Why has migration increased in recent years / as a country develops" wants **enabling factors**, not just push and pull: transport and car ownership, the internet and media, higher incomes and education, weaker family ties, remote working, government policy (decentralisation, urban renewal, resettlement of squatters, freedom of movement), chain migration, and for international migration also inequality, conflict, climate change and the rebound after COVID-19.

"Explain how push and pull factors influence the decision to migrate" wants more than lists: the **balance** of pluses and minuses at both ends, the obstacles, personal factors and perception (Lee's model), and how the balance differs for economic migrants and refugees, and between LICs and HICs.

Using a photograph or figure ("suggest push factors from the area shown"): base each factor on something you can **see** ("only small fields on steep slopes and no factories, so there is little work other than farming"), not generic ones.

Rarer variants: why migrants settle in inner cities or the largest cities; why some countries attract many migrants (relative pull factors: jobs, services, a shared language, safety, colonial links, climate); why a country can be both a source and a destination of refugees (different groups leave and arrive, from different borders, at different times; some are in transit); why internally displaced people return (the danger has ended, family, land, rebuilding work); how communications affect migration (information before leaving, keeping in touch, cheap flights).

2. Essay (15 marks): assess a claim about migration (30 questions)

Every Question 5 ends with one. Claims that recur:

- **Impacts**: rural–urban migration causes problems in urban (or rural) areas; urban–rural migration brings disadvantages to rural areas in HICs; refugee flows affect LIC/MIC hosts more than HIC hosts; migration is always negative for receiving areas; source areas suffer more than they gain; for your case study, the receiving areas gained (or the source gained more); internal migration created empty city cores; residential segregation is the main impact of intra-urban moves.
- **Management**: it is difficult for governments to manage rural–urban, urban–rural or international migration; how far governments control international migration.
- **Factors**: age has a major impact on migration; distance distinguishes types of migration; obstacles matter less for economic migrants; push factors matter more than pull; transport is the main reason migration increased.

1. **Introduction**: define the key terms and say what you will weigh.
2. **The case for**, with explained points and **named, detailed examples** (places, numbers, dates).
3. **The case against**: the benefits against the problems, the other factors against the one named, or the countries that manage easily against those that cannot.
4. **"It depends"**: on **time** (impacts change as migrants settle), **place** (LIC against HIC; Australia against Greece), the **number** and **type** of migrants (commuters, retirees, refugees, skilled workers), and **governance** (China controls internal migration, the USA does not). This lifts an answer into Level 4.
5. **Conclusion**: a clear judgement on "how far", which follows from the argument.

For factor essays ("age has a major impact", "distance distinguishes types"), work through several **types** of migration (rural–urban, urban–rural, intra-urban, international economic, refugees) and say for each whether the factor matters, then weigh it against cost, information, perception, barriers, sex, wealth and education. For case-study essays, use the **same stream** as in part (b), with facts. Don't confuse refugees with economic migrants, and don't drift from the area asked (receiving or source, rural or urban).

3. Describe or compare a pattern or trend in a figure (18 questions)

Maps of migrants or net migration (world, a country's regions), line graphs over time, bar charts by continent or type of area, age/sex pyramids of migrants and of the whole population, tables of source countries, and photographs (a refugee camp).

1. **The overall pattern first**: a north–south divide, high near the border or the coast, most gains in and around the large cities, mostly HICs, clustered or scattered, uneven. A statement of the overall pattern often earns 2 marks; without one, the maximum is 1.
2. **Then the detail**: the highest and lowest areas, named, with values from the key; **anomalies** (a high value in a low region); the share from one region, income group or language group in a table ("half of the sources are neighbouring countries").
3. **Data**: quote values with units; for a trend, values at the start and end, the rate of change and any change of direction.
4. **Compare**: link the two lines, groups or places in each sentence, with similarities and differences ("both rose, but Asia's rose by more"); two separate descriptions earn at most 1. Watch for **separate scales** on a graph with two axes: one line "overtaking" the other means nothing.

5. **Describe only**: no reasons unless asked. "Distribution" means where; don't just list countries or compare two of them.

For a **photograph of a refugee camp**, describe what is visible: the shelters (tents, temporary materials, rows, density), the services (water tanks, toilets, paths), the setting (dry, bare ground, fences) and the people.

4. Explain the impacts of migration on source or receiving areas (17 questions)

1. **Read the question's focus**: source or receiving area; economic, social or both; positive, negative or either; refugees, economic migrants or internal migrants. Answers that write about the wrong area, or add positives when negatives are asked, earn nothing for those points.
2. **For each impact**: name it **(1)**, then develop it, with a consequence or an example **(1)**: "The source area loses its most skilled workers, such as doctors **(1)**, so health care gets worse and the money spent training them is lost to the country **(1)**."
3. **Use the tables** in "Understand it": for receiving areas, labour, skills, lower wage costs, a larger market, enterprise, taxes, a lower dependency ratio and diversity against housing, services, tension and integration; for source areas, remittances, less underemployment, returning skills against brain drain, lost labour, lower taxes, remittance dependency, ageing and closing services.
4. **Refugees**: on hosts, the costs of housing, feeding and services against labour, skills, spending and aid money; on the source, the loss of the educated who flee first and of output.

"Suggest two" parts earn 1 mark each. In 8-mark parts, use examples (Lebanon or Türkiye and Syrian refugees; Polish workers in the UK; the Philippines). When a table gives data (refugee numbers, population, GNI), use it to argue: "refugees make up a far larger share of the poorer country's population, and its GNI per person is much lower, so it has less money to house, feed and treat them": state the difference in the data **and** say why it makes the problem bigger.

5. Explain how age and sex shape migration and population structure (16 questions)

1. **Why young adults move most**: few ties, leaving home for study, a first job or marriage, risk-taking, a long working life ahead. Link it to the **type** of move asked: young adults to cities and abroad.
2. **Other ages**: families to suburbs (the life-cycle model); retirees urban–rural or abroad; the elderly moving near family. "Describe how age influences patterns" needs **at least two** patterns.
3. **Why one sex moves more**: work available (mining and building for men, domestic and care work for women), custom (who earns, who may travel alone), marriage, safety on the journey, and for refugee camps, men staying to fight, being conscripted or detained.
4. **Impacts on structure**: receiving areas gain young adults (a bulge, lower dependency, more births later) or retirees (ageing); source areas lose working-age adults (a notch, ageing, fewer births, sex imbalance). Say which age and sex groups change, and how. A labelled pyramid is credited.
5. **HIC against LIC migrants**: age, life stage, education, wealth, the work sought, voluntary or forced, where they settle.

Don't just say "young people are healthier": say **why** that makes them move. General reasons for migrating (jobs) need to be linked to age.

6. Read a value off a figure or table (16 questions)

1. **Read the exact item** asked: the year, area, country, age group or continent with the largest or smallest value, or one meeting a condition.
2. **"Number" or "percentage"?** The sub-region with the largest **number** of migrants is not the one with the largest **percentage**. Examiners report this mistake often.
3. **Net gain** means in-migrants greater than out-migrants; check you are reading the right direction ("migration into" against "migration out of") and the right sex.
4. **Give the unit** and the "thousand" or "million" from the axis.

7. Describe, compare or classify types and processes of migration (14 questions)

1. **Compare chain and stepped migration** (or stepped and urban–urban, or economic and refugee flows): use the comparison tables in "Understand it", linking each point ("whereas", "both"), with **similarities as well as differences**; two separate descriptions earn at most 4.
2. **Describe the process** (3 marks): one mark for each stage or feature: for stepped migration, stages, up the hierarchy, over time; for intra-urban, a change of home, within one urban area, for a year or more, with a cause.
3. **Describe the main types of internal migration**: rural–urban, urban–rural, intra-urban, urban–urban, each with a located example and its usual cause; without examples the maximum is 3.
4. **Classify**: name the **criterion** each time (by boundary, choice, time, distance, direction, cause), then the groups, then an example. A list of types without the criteria is not a classification, and the question asks for several ways.
5. **Characteristics of refugee flows**: sudden, large, all ages, many women and children, to neighbouring countries, into camps, long stays, from particular ethnic or religious groups, caused by war, persecution or disaster.

Rarer: advantages of chain migration; pros and cons of stepped migration for the migrant; why stepped migration is rarer internationally (answer about **stepped** migration, not about border controls in general).

8. Explain constraints, obstacles and barriers (10 questions)

1. **Use the right meaning**: a constraint limits or slows, an obstacle must be overcome, a barrier blocks. For "the difference between obstacles, constraints and barriers", define each with an example and show how one factor can be different things for different people.
2. **Physical or human?** If the question says physical, give only natural features (mountains, deserts, seas, distance, climate); visas and costs earn nothing there. If it asks for one of each, label them.
3. **Develop each**: "The Mediterranean Sea lies between North Africa and Europe **(1)**, so migrants must pay smugglers for a place on overcrowded boats, and thousands have drowned **(1)**."
4. **For refugees**: dangers on the journey, legal barriers at the destination, length of journey, physical barriers, closed borders. **Why distance shapes refugee flows**: most go to the nearest safe country because they leave suddenly, on foot, with little money, and hope to return soon.

Don't give reasons for migrating, or disadvantages of migrating, when constraints are asked.

9. Calculate from migration data (10 questions)

Always "show your working", 2 or 3 marks: one for the working, one for the answer with its unit (and sometimes one for each step).

1. **Write the sum** with the values read: "1520 – 380".
2. **Keep the signs** in a mean of yearly changes: add all the values, positive and negative, then divide by the **number of years**: $(+1.2 - 0.4 - 2.0 + 0.6) \div 4 = -0.6 \div 4 = -0.15$.
3. **Percentage of a total** = part ÷ total × 100: 0.6 million migrants in a population of 8 million are $0.6 \div 8 \times 100 = 7.5\%$, not 0.075% or 75%.
4. **Units**: "1140 thousand" or "1.14 million", never just "1140" when the axis is in thousands.
5. **Percentage change** = (new – old) ÷ old × 100, and keep the sign: a village falling from 2400 to 2100 people has changed by $(2100 - 2400) \div 2400 \times 100 = -12.5\%$, a fall of 12.5%.
6. **Kinds**: a difference (out minus in, males minus females), a net migration balance, a percentage, a percentage change, a mean.

10. Define a migration term (10 questions)

Two or three marks, one for each element:

- **Migration**: a movement of people **(1)** to live in a new place, changing their permanent home, for at least a year **(1)**.
- **Voluntary migration**: a movement of a person **(1)** by their own choice **(1)** for at least a year or permanently **(1)**.
- **Forced migration**: a move to live in another area with no real choice, under threat to life or livelihood **(1)**, because of war, persecution or disaster **(1)**, for more than a year **(1)**.
- **Economic migrant**: a person who moves voluntarily **(1)** for work or a better standard of living **(1)** for a year or more **(1)**.
- **Refugee**: a person forced to leave **(1)** their own country, crossing an international border **(1)**, to escape war, persecution or disaster, fearing for their life **(1)**.
- **Urban–urban migration**: a move from one town or city **(1)** to another town or city **(1)**, for a year or more **(1)**.
- **Stepped** and **intra-urban** migration: as in type 7.

Examiners report that the "**at least a year**" element is often left out.

11. Explain why governments control or manage migration (4 questions)

1. **Why limit refugees**: the costs of housing, food and health care; protecting services; avoiding friction with local people; security fears; the problems of camps; protecting local cultures. Develop each with a consequence.

2. **Why camps are only short-term**: no permanent housing, work or citizenship; dependence on aid; disease and crowding; tension with local people; people want to rebuild their lives.
3. **Why control internal migration** (8 marks): to stop cities overloading (housing, services, unemployment, informal settlements); to keep enough workers in farming and food production; to spread development to poorer regions and resources; for security of border regions; with examples (China's *hukou*, Indonesia's transmigration, Brasília).

Worked examples

Example 1

The table shows internal migration between the five regions of an MIC in one year (thousands of people).

Region	In-migrants	Out-migrants
Capital region	412	168
Northern coast	96	88
Central plateau	54	131
Western mining region	73	49
Southern farmlands	38	237
Total	673	673

(a) (i) State the region with the largest net migration loss. **[1]** (ii) Calculate the net migration balance of the Capital region, and the percentage of all in-migrants who moved to the Capital region. Show your working. **[3]**

(b) Suggest two reasons for out-migration from the Southern farmlands. **[2]**

(c) Explain the impact of this migration on the population structure of the Capital region. **[4]**

(a)(i) Southern farmlands, a net loss of $38 - 237 = -199$ thousand **(1)**.

(ii) Net migration $= 412 - 168 = +244$ thousand **(1)**. Percentage $= \frac{412}{673} \times 100$ **(1)** $= 61.2\%$ of all in-migrants **(1)**.

(b)

- Mechanisation of farms, or land sold to large commercial farms, leaves farm labourers without work **(1)**.
- Few secondary schools, clinics or other services in scattered villages, so young people leave for education **(1)**.

(c)

- The Capital region gains a net 244 thousand people, most of them young adults aged about 18–35, so its population structure gains a **bulge** in the young working ages and its dependency ratio falls **(1)**, because these migrants are of working age and few elderly people move to the city **(1)**.
- If more men than women arrive, as is common where migrants seek work in building and factories, there will be more males than females in these ages **(1)**; and as the migrants marry and have children a few years later, the number of births rises and the base of the pyramid widens **(1)**.

Example 2

With the aid of examples, explain why rural–urban migration continues in many LICs and MICs even though many migrants end up living in informal settlements and working in the informal sector. **[8]**

Migrants weigh their life in the village against what they **expect** to find in the city, so migration can continue even when city life is hard.

First, the **push factors** in rural areas are often stronger than the problems of the city. In many villages there is little work except farming, and as farms are mechanised or land is bought by large companies, labourers lose their jobs. In north-east Brazil, repeated droughts destroy harvests and leave families in debt, so staying may mean hunger. Schools, clinics, clean water and electricity are scarce, and as young people leave, services lose their threshold population and close, which pushes even more people out.

Second, migrants compare **expected** incomes. Even an informal job selling food or collecting recyclable waste in Mumbai can pay more than farm labouring, and the chance of a better-paid factory job, though small, makes the move worth the risk. A shack in Dharavi may be crowded, but it is close to work, and the city still offers schools, hospitals and electricity that the village lacks, so migrants believe their children will have a better future.

Third, **chain migration** lowers the risk. Relatives already in the city meet newcomers, share housing and find them work, so the move is less of a gamble. Phones and social media keep villagers informed about jobs, although stories of success are often exaggerated, so the "bright lights" image of the city persists.

Finally, migrants can send **remittances** home. A young man in Shenzhen sending part of his wages to his family in rural Sichuan supports parents and children who stay behind, so the household as a whole gains even if the migrant's own housing is poor.

So rural–urban migration continues because, for many rural families, the city is still the better option.

Level 3 (6–8 marks): several reasons clearly explained, linking push factors, expected income, chain migration and remittances to the question's point about informal housing and work, with located examples.

Example 3

'Government policy is the most important factor influencing international migration.' With the aid of examples, how far do you agree with this statement? **[15]**

Introduction. International migration is the movement of people across a national border to live for at least a year. Governments decide who may enter and stay, but whether people want to move, and can, also depends on economic differences, conflict, networks and distance.

For. Policy decides who can move legally and where. Freedom of movement in the EU meant that after Poland joined in 2004, about 1 million Poles were living in the UK by 2017; once the UK left the EU, the flow fell sharply. Points-based systems in Canada and Australia select skilled, young, English- or French-speaking migrants, so their immigrants are very different from the USA's. Gulf states recruit millions of contract workers from South Asia, and in the UAE about 88% of residents are foreign nationals. Policy can also stop flows: Australia's offshore processing of asylum seekers from 2012–2013 cut boat arrivals almost to nothing, and the EU–Turkey deal of March 2016 sharply reduced crossings to the Greek islands. Even forced migration is shaped by policy, as the EU's temporary protection let millions of Ukrainians settle quickly after 2022.

Against. Policy cannot remove the reasons people move. The wage gap between Mexico and the USA, labour demand on US farms and family networks kept millions moving north whatever the rules, and about 4 million Mexican-born people live in the USA without documents. Refugee flows are driven by war and persecution: about 740 000 Rohingya fled to Bangladesh in 2017, and 1.5 million Syrians reached Lebanon, regardless of policy. Distance and geography matter too: most refugees go to a neighbouring country, and Greece's islands near Türkiye are far harder to control than Australia. Economic change can matter more than policy: Mexican migration fell after 2009 mainly because of the US recession and Mexico's falling birth rate. Enabling factors, such as cheap flights, the internet and chain migration, also make flows grow.

It depends. Policy matters most for **voluntary, legal** migration to wealthy countries that can enforce their borders (an island like Australia), and least for **forced** migration and for countries with long land borders next to conflict or poverty. It decides the **type** of migrant more than the **number**, and over time it reacts to migration as much as it controls it.

Conclusion. Government policy is a major influence on who migrates and where, especially for economic migrants to HICs, but it is not the most important factor overall: the differences in wealth and safety between places create the pressure to move, and policy only channels it.

Level 4 (12–15 marks): both sides weighed with detailed, located examples (places, numbers, dates), variation by type of migration, place and time, and a judgement that answers "how far".

Common mistakes

- **Leaving "for at least a year" out of definitions** of migration, voluntary migration or refugees.
- **Confusing push and pull**: a push is at the origin, a pull at the destination. A reflexive pair (rural unemployment and urban jobs) counts once.
- **Answering about the wrong flow**: inter-urban for intra-urban, rural–urban for urban–urban, international for internal, LICs when the question says HICs. Underline the flow before writing.
- **Confusing chain and stepped migration.** Chain follows contacts, usually in one move; stepped climbs the hierarchy in stages.

- **Treating refugees as economic migrants**: refugees are forced and pushed; people moving because of the cost of living are economic migrants.
- **Confusing source and destination areas** when impacts are asked.
- **Physical constraints that are not physical**: visas and costs are human.
- **Two separate descriptions when asked to compare**, and describing without data.
- **Generic answers to a resource**: push factors "from the photograph" must be things you can see.
- **One-word answers** ("peaceful", "jobs", "better living conditions") and vague phrases without development.
- **Calculation slips**: 45 for 45 000; a percentage written as 0.7% or 70% instead of 7%; a missing working step; mixing up number and percentage.
- **Listing classification types without the criteria**, or giving only one way when the question asks for ways.
- **Examples in name only** ("e.g. Africa", "London"): generic answers are capped at 4 in 8-mark parts and 6 in essays.
- **Essays that describe without judging**: say how far you agree, and why.

How to get the marks

- **Command words. Describe** = what is shown, with data, no reasons. **Explain** = reasons and processes. **Suggest** = apply what you know to the resource; any sensible reason is credited. **Compare** = linked similarities and differences ("whereas", "both"). **Define** = the precise meaning with every element. **Assess**, **how far**, **to what extent** = weigh both sides and reach a judgement.
- **Develop each point.** A simple point earns 1, a developed point (with detail, a consequence or an example) 2. The number of marks tells you how many points to make; repeating one reason earns nothing extra, and in "suggest two" parts long explanations earn no extra marks.
- **Use the resource.** Quote values and units, name places on the map, and in "suggest" questions base reasons on what the figure shows.
- **Working and units.** Show the sum, then the answer with its unit; method and answer each earn a mark.
- **Examples.** 8-mark parts need located examples (a maximum of 4 without them); 15-mark essays need detailed ones built into the argument (a maximum of 6 without them). Quote places, numbers and dates: "Lebanon hosted about 1.5 million Syrians, about one person in four" beats "countries like Lebanon".
- **Stay on the question's focus**: the flow, the area (source or receiving, rural or urban), the kind of impact (economic, social), positive or negative, and the context (HIC or LIC/MIC).
- **Diagrams earn credit**: labelled pyramids for population structure, Lee's model for the decision to migrate, and a sketch of stepped and chain migration.
- **Case study**: one named stream, with its causes, character, scale, pattern and impacts on both ends, and the same stream in (b) and (c).

Quick check

1. A town of 48 000 people has 3150 in-migrants and 2430 out-migrants in a year. Calculate its net migration and its net migration rate per 1000.
2. A city's population rose from 2.40 million to 2.76 million in five years. Natural increase added 0.14 million. Calculate the net migration over the five years, and the percentage of the growth that was due to migration.
3. A rural district's net migration rates over five years were +2.4, −0.6, −1.8, +0.9 and −3.1 per 1000. Calculate the mean.
4. Using the two pyramids in "Understand it", calculate the percentage of each area's population aged 20–39, and the number of males per 100 females aged 20–39 in the source area.
5. Explain the difference between a constraint and a barrier to migration, with an example of each.

Answers

1. Net migration $= 3150 - 2430 = +720$ people. Rate $= \dfrac{720}{48\,000} \times 1000 = 15.0$ per 1000 (a net gain).
2. Growth $= 2.76 - 2.40 = 0.36$ million. Net migration $= 0.36 - 0.14 = 0.22$ million (220 000 people). Share $= 0.22 \div 0.36 \times 100 = 61.1\%$ of the growth.
3. Sum $= 2.4 - 0.6 - 1.8 + 0.9 - 3.1 = -2.2$; mean $= -2.2 \div 5 = -0.44$ per 1000 (a small net loss on average).
4. Source area: $4.5 + 4.0 + 7.0 + 6.0 = 21.5\%$. Receiving area: $12.5 + 10.5 + 11.0 + 9.5 = 43.5\%$. Males per 100 females in the source area: $(4.5 + 4.0) \div (7.0 + 6.0) \times 100 = 8.5 \div 13.0 \times 100 = 65.4$, so many more young women than young men remain, because mostly men have left.
5. A constraint limits or slows migration without stopping it: the cost of a flight means a poor family can send only one member abroad, after saving for years. A barrier blocks it: a closed, fenced border stops people crossing at all, or a ban on entry for people of one nationality.

Past questions to try

- **9696/22/O/N/24 Q5**: forced migration and its economic impacts, how push and pull factors work together, and an essay on distance.
- **9696/21/M/J/25 Q5**: causes of forced international migration, why international migration has increased, and an essay on managing it.
- **9696/21/M/J/24 Q5**: obstacles, constraints and barriers, why governments control internal migration, and an essay on transport.
- **9696/21/M/J/23 Q5**: economic and refugee flows compared, why refugee flows may grow, and an essay on refugees in LICs and HICs.