

Pearson Edexcel AS/A Level Geography Specification Updates

Key dates

- AS/A Level Geography first teach September 2024
- AS Geography first assessment Summer 2025
- A Level Geography first assessment Summer 2026

What's changing and why?

Topic 1 Tectonic Processes and Hazards

Spec point	What is the change?	What type of change is it? (DE&I, Clarification, Update)	Why are we making this change?	Level of change
1.2a	We've made two amendments to the key elements of the theory of plate movements. The changes are minor: we've changed 'mantle convection' to 'convection', and we've added the term 'ridge push'.	Update	To bring the detailed content up to date with current thinking about the theory of plate movement.	Minor change.

	We slightly changed the order of the remaining elements so that they flow logically.			
1.4c	Replaced 'world' with 'countries', so the final part of the sentence now reads '...contrasting locations in developed, emerging, and developing countries.'	Update	To improve the clarity of the wording.	No change.
1.6c	An update to the wording to include the consideration of human factors alongside physical factors, and to include the importance of locational context when learning about the scale of a disaster.	DE&I	We've made this change so that students understand that the scale of a disaster will be influenced by human and physical factors, and the locational context, which could include consideration of the historical, political, social, and economic context of the place being studied.	More substantial change.

Topic 2A Glaciated Landscapes and Change

Spec point	What is the change?	What type of change is it? (DE&I, clarification, update)	Why are we making this change?	Level of change
2A1.a, b, and c	We've updated the wording of the key idea to include the Anthropocene. We've updated the wording of bullets a and b to specify that	Update	To update the key idea and detailed content so that it better reflects current	More substantial change.

	students should know the factors leading to climate change in the Pleistocene, Holocene, and Anthropocene, and we've added variations in the composition of atmospheric gases to the list of causes in bullet b. We've removed bullet c from this key idea as shorter-term climate change is now covered in bullet b.		thinking and recent resources on this topic.	
2A5.c	Added 'basal temperature' as a factor that controls the rate of glacial movement.	Clarification	To clarify the content requirements, basal slip appears as a process in 2A.5b, and basal temperature is a factor that controls basal slip.	No change required.
2A11.c	Replaced the term global warming with climate change.	Update	Climate change is broader and allows for precipitation changes, cooling temperatures, and El Niño/La Niña, etc. Global warming is a misleading term as a warming of temperatures isn't the only impact. It is the whole range of climate change processes we want them to consider.	No change required.
2A12.c	Replaced the term climate warming with climate change. Removed the phrase 'is a context risk'.	Update/Clarification	We replaced the term climate warming so that the wording is consistent with 2A11.c. We've removed 'is a context risk' to improve the clarity of the specification wording.	No change required.

Topic 2B Coastal Landscapes and Change

Spec point	What is the change?	What type of change is it? (DE&I, Clarification, Update)	Why are we making this change?	Level of change
2B1.c	We've changed the order of the words	Clarification	To improve the clarity of the bullet point, there is no change to the content requirements.	No change required.
2B2.c	We've added bedding planes as an example of geological structure.	Clarification	Schools are already teaching about bedding planes. They have a major influence on how coasts change and landscapes, e.g. sedimentary coastlines such as Flamborough Head or the Dorset coastline.	No change required.
2B12.c	The global symbols suggest suitable places to exemplify the content; we've replaced the place name Chittagong with the name Chattogram.	DE&I	In 2018, the Government of Bangladesh officially changed the name to reflect the Bengali spelling and pronunciation.	Minor change to the suggested place exemplification.

Topic 3 Globalisation

Spec point	What is the change?	What type of change is it? (DE&I, clarification, update)	Why are we making this change?	Level of change
3.3c	We've added 'historical' to the reasons why some places are largely 'detached' from globalisation. We've replaced the term 'switched-off' with 'detached'. We've replaced the place exemplification 'Sahel countries' to 'some rural communities in Niger'.	DE&I	To avoid inaccurate and problematic generalisations of countries or regions.	More substantial change
3.4a	We've added 'growing inequalities' as a negative economic impact of the global shift. We've also removed the phrase 'changes in the built environment that can bring' to clarify the wording.	DE&I	To provide a more balanced perspective of the costs and benefits of the global shift in manufacturing. For example, inequalities and rates of poverty in rural India have increased, leading to farmers protesting in 2022.	Minor change
3.5b	We've replaced the Russian oligarchs in London exemplification with 'high-wage economic migration to London and Singapore'. We've removed 'mass' before low-waged migration.	DE&I	To provide a more balanced place exemplification and to avoid the possibility of negative stereotypes or generalisations.	More substantial change to the suggested place exemplification.

3.6a	We've removed 'increasingly' from the phrase 'an increasingly westernised global culture'. We've removed the emphasis on emerging and developing countries when learning about how a global culture has led to opportunities for disadvantaged groups, and we've tweaked the wording of the suggested example to 'Paralympic movement'. Our place examples are suggestions, and teachers are free to choose their own examples.	DE&I/Update	To avoid the possibility of inaccurate and problematic generalisations of countries at different levels of development, and to reflect the fact that the existing place example was outdated.	Minor change
3.6b	We've reworded the bullet point to make it clear that in some places cultural erosion is the result of deliberate action. We've also replaced the term 'tribal lifestyles' with 'Indigenous lifestyles'.	DE&I	To avoid using terms/language that may be problematic or offensive. To ensure that cultural erosion is not seen as something that is neutral, as this is inaccurate and has the potential to cause harm.	Minor change
3.6c	We've added 'including governments' at the end of the bullet point.	Clarification	To clarify that the term 'groups' can include governments and not just activists or movements.	Minor change

3.7a	We've changed 'air pollution indices' to 'pollution indices'.	Update	To slightly broaden the measures of environmental quality, centres may continue to use the example of air pollution indices.	Minor change
3.8a	We've reworded the second part of this bullet point, and we've updated the suggested place exemplification.	DE&I	To avoid oversimplified and inaccurate contrasts between 'successful' and 'unsuccessful' diasporas.	Minor change.
3.8c	We've moved the First Nations in Canada place exemplification to the end of the bullet point, and we've replaced 'economic advantages' with 'changes brought by globalisation'.	DE&I	To avoid the suggestion that globalisation always brings economic advantages.	Minor change

Topic 4A Regenerating Places

Spec point	What is the change?	What type of change is it? (DE&I, clarification, update)	Why are we making this change?	Level of change
Intro	In the overview, we've clarified that both the local and contrasting place should be a locality, a neighbourhood, or a small community, either urban or rural.	Clarification	To clarify the specification requirements.	No change required
4A.3 a, b, and c	We've reorganised the content in bullets a, b, and c so that it flows more logically and to remove some repetition.	Clarification	To address customer queries about how to teach about your chosen places.	Minor change.
4A.4a	We've replaced the suggested place example of San Francisco with 'Palo Alto and Silicon Valley'.	Update	Due to high levels of multiple deprivation and homelessness in San Francisco.	More substantial change to the suggested place exemplification.

4A.4c	We've removed the term 'sink estates' from the bullet point as well as the other examples of housing areas. We've replaced these with the phrase 'in urban and rural locations'.	DE&I	To avoid using a term like sink estates that has stigmatised areas of social housing, students need to know about variations in the need for regeneration and the causes of this, but they don't need to know about this wide range of housing examples.	More substantial area of change and a slight reduction in content.
4A.5c	We've reworded this bullet point and removed ethnic tensions as a cause of conflicts between groups.	DE&I	To better reflect the intended meaning of the content and avoid content that could be misleading or could cause harm.	Minor change.
4A.6a-c	We've removed the globe symbols from these bullet points.	Clarification	The specification wording refers to your chosen local place, so the globe symbols are not required.	No change required.
4A.7b	We've removed 'permission for fracking'.	Update	To bring the content up to date with current policy, permits for fracking could still be taught under the 'planning laws' element of this bullet point.	Minor change.

Topic 4B Diverse Places

Spec point	What is the change?	What type of change is it? (DE&I, Clarification, Update)	Why are we making this change?	Level of change
Intro	In the overview, we've clarified that both the local and contrasting place should be a locality, a neighbourhood, or a small community, either urban or rural.	Clarification	To clarify the specification requirements.	No change required.
4B.3 a, b, and c	We've reorganised the content in bullets a, b, and c so that it flows more logically and to remove some repetition.	Clarification	To address customer queries about how to teach about your chosen places.	Minor change.
4B.4b	We've reworded this bullet point about urban locations so that the language is more consistent with 4B.5b. We've removed the term 'threatening' and the descriptors of crime rates and environmental quality.	DE&I	To avoid using terms that could lead to negative stereotypes of urban locations and to achieve better consistency across the urban/rural detailed content requirements.	No change required.

4B.6a-c	We've removed the globe symbols from these bullet points.	Clarification	The specification wording refers to your chosen local place, so the globe symbols are not required.	No change required.
4B.8a	We've removed the place exemplification requirement and the suggestion to teach about Russian oligarch families in London. We've removed the requirement to focus on ethnic segregation, and we've added 'ethnicity' as an example of social indicators.	DE&I	To provide more balanced content and to avoid possible stereotypes or generalisations.	Minor change.
4B.9b	We've replaced 'frequent' with 'sometimes' when describing the frequency of tensions.	DE&I	To provide more balanced content and to avoid the suggestion that it is inevitable that tensions will occur.	No change required.
4B.10c	We've replaced 'Assimilation' with 'Integration'.	DE&I	Integration is the preferred term which is used in policy-making and recognised as a two-way or even multi-way process.	Minor change.
4B.11c	We've added 'their role' to explain why different stakeholders use different criteria to assess the success of managing change.	Clarification	To make it clearer why stakeholders use a different set of criteria to assess the success of managing change.	Minor change.

4B.12a	We've updated the suggested place exemplification to 'Lake District National Park Partnership'.	Update	To update the suggested place exemplification.	Minor change to the suggested place exemplification.
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Topic 5 The Water Cycle and Water Insecurity

Spec point	What is the change?	What type of change is it? (DE&I, Clarification, Update)	Why are we making this change?	Level of change
5.1a	We've removed 'inputs' and 'outputs' and replaced them with 'processes'.	Update	The global hydrological cycle is a closed system, so it is incorrect to say it has inputs and outputs.	Minor change.
5.2a	We've changed 'hydrological cycle' to 'drainage basin', and we've removed the requirement to study orographic, frontal, and convectional precipitation.	Update	To match the key idea and bullet points b and c.	Minor change and slight reduction in content.
5.7b	We've removed the globe symbols from the bracketed content.	Clarification	To correct a typographical error, place examples are not required in this bullet point.	No change required.

Topic 6 The Carbon Cycle and Energy Security

Spec point	What is the change?	What type of change is it? (DE&I, Clarification, Update)	Why are we making this change?	Level of change
6.1 and 6.2	We've added slow carbon cycle and fast carbon cycle to the key idea wording.	Clarification	To improve the clarity of the key ideas.	No change required.
6.1c	We've reworded the bullet point to provide more clarity on this part of the specification content.	Clarification	To improve the clarity of the specification requirements.	Minor change.
6.8a	We've removed the wording 'especially in countries at higher levels of development' and replaced it with 'in some locations'.	DE&I	It is inaccurate to suggest that developed countries are doing more to protect or expand forests when China and other countries are reversing forest loss too.	No change required.
6.9a	We've added 'positive' to feedback mechanisms.	Clarification	To improve the clarity of the specification requirements.	No change required.
6.9b and c	We've moved the requirement to study solar radiation management to 6.9c.	Update	Solar radiation management is a mitigation strategy rather than an adaptation, so it should be studied in the context of 6.9c.	No change required.

Topic 7 Superpowers

Spec point	What is the change?	What type of change is it? (DE&I, Clarification, Update)	Why are we making this change?	Level of change
7.1c	We've added a global symbol to show where exemplification is required, and we've replaced Mackinder's geostrategic theory with China's Belt and Road policy.	Update	China is widely taught as part of this content, and the BRI policy links to Mackinder. The globe symbol means that teachers have the flexibility to choose another example.	Minor change to the suggested place exemplification.
7.2a	We've added 'militarised' before colonial control.	DE&I	To be more explicit about what colonial control involved and the negative consequences for countries that were colonised.	No change required.
7.3a	We've removed 'considered'.	Update	To better reflect the role and importance of these groups of countries in the global economy.	No change required.
7.3c	We've added 'Contrasting' to the start of this bullet point.	Clarification	To highlight that students need to understand the differences between World Systems Theory, Dependency Theory, and Modernisation Theory	No change required.
7.4a	We've replaced 'influence' with 'attempt to control'.	Update	To provide a more accurate description of the role superpowers play in the global economy.	No change required.

7.5b	We've replaced the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) with its current name, the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA).	Update	To reflect the correct name of the policy.	No change required.
7.6b	We've clarified that this part of the content is about the differences in willingness of superpowers to act. We've also added a globe symbol before the place names. Teachers should choose two contrasting places such as the USA and China.	Clarification	By adding a globe symbol, it means teachers can go into more detail on two contrasting places, such as the USA and China. The globe symbol means that teachers have the flexibility to choose other examples.	Minor change and a slight reduction in breadth of content.
7.9a	We've clarified that economic problems are an ongoing challenge to superpowers, rather than just the USA and EU. We've added a globe symbol before USA and EU to indicate they are place exemplifications.	Clarification	Economic problems are a challenge to all superpowers, not just the USA and EU. The globe symbol means that teachers have the flexibility to choose other examples.	No change required.

Topic 8A Health, Human Rights, and Intervention

Spec point	What is the change?	What type of change is it? (DE&I, clarification, update)	Why are we making this change?	Level of change
8A.1a	We've clarified that the dominant models of development that are contested are Western in their origin.	DE&I	To raise awareness that dominant models of development that use GDP as a key measure of development are a Western construct and are not universally shared.	No change required.
8A.1b	We've made a very minor change to the second half of this bullet point. We've added 'seen as' after economic growth.	DE&I	To add nuance to the view that economic growth is the best way to achieve human development goals.	No change required.
8A.1c	No change has been made to the content, but we have tidied up the wording so that it flows more logically.	Clarification	To improve the clarity of the detailed content.	No change required.
8A.2c	In the place exemplification, we've replaced the wording 'Aboriginal peoples in Australia' with 'Indigenous peoples in Australia'.	DE&I	To avoid using a term that is seen to be insensitive and could cause offence. To make the ideas of	Minor change to the suggested

	We've moved the place exemplification to the end of the sentence.		inequalities in access and income levels more central to the suggested example.	place exemplification.
8A.3c	We've replaced the UN's Millennium Development Goals with the Sustainable Development Goals.	Update	To update the content requirements.	Minor change.
8A.6b	We've replaced the suggested place exemplification with 'First Nations in Canada'.	DE&I	To provide a named place example in the detailed content rather than a generic suggestion.	Minor change to the suggested place exemplification.
8A.8c	We've updated the place exemplification. We've added the Dakota and Keystone XL pipeline as a suggested example. We've amended the 'land grabs in East Africa' suggestion to 'land acquisitions by TNCs in Ethiopia'.	DE&I	We've added a Western example to prevent the idea that negative social and environmental impacts always happen in countries in the Global South. We've provided a named example rather than a generic suggestion.	More substantial change to the suggested place exemplification.
8A.9c	We've removed 'increasingly' and the requirement to focus on 'minority groups'.	Update	We've made minor amendments to the wording to bring the content up to date and to open this content up to teaching about any specific group who have had their human rights threatened.	No change required.

			Centres can still focus on minority groups if they wish to.	
8A.12b	We've updated the suggested place examples to include UN Women and UNICEF.	Update	It is not entirely accurate to say that Côte d'Ivoire in 2011 is an example of a non-military intervention. The updated examples have had more success in improving human rights and development.	Change to a suggested place example.
Integrated skill 8	The suggested skill remains the same. We've rephrased the example by replacing 'European or Asian boat people' with 'refugees'.	DE&I	To remove the phrase 'boat people' as this may be seen as insensitive.	No change required.

Topic 8B Migration, Identity and Sovereignty

Spec point	What is the change?	What type of change is it? (DE&I, clarification, update)	Why are we making this change?	Level of change
8B.1c	We've removed 'voluntary' before economic migrants.	DE&I	The distinctions between different groups of migrants are complex and contested. We've made this change because not all economic migration is voluntary.	No change required.

8B.3a	We've removed the wording 'rate of assimilation' and replaced it with 'integration'. We've also removed the wording 'especially when there are distinctive ethnic differences'.	DE&I	Assimilation is a problematic term, and integration is the preferred term, which is also used in policy making. Integration is also recognised as a two-way or even multi-way process. To remove language that has the potential to cause harm.	Minor change.
8B.5b	We've added 'European' to distinguish European colonialism from other empires. We amended the wording so that it reads 'the transition to independence involved conflicts'. We've updated the place exemplification to use the UN spelling Viet-Nam.	DE&I	It is important to distinguish European colonialism from other empires. The content should also reflect the fact that previous colonial powers were involved in the transition to independence and the conflicts that followed when countries gained independence.	Minor change.
8B.7c	We've removed Russia from the bracketed examples of member states. We've replaced the term 'failed state' with the wording 'countries labelled as fragile states'.	DE&I	The term 'failed state' is a political term used to justify interventions. It is absolutist and doesn't reflect the fact that all countries are on a continuum of development. The term 'fragile states' recognises this continuum and encourages more nuanced discussions.	Minor change.
8B.10b	We've rephrased this specification bullet point. 'Might be' has been replaced with 'has been historically.'	DE&I	To show that national identity and loyalty can both be linked to the colonial past.	No change required

8B.10c	We've changed 'loyalty' to 'loyalties'.	DE&I	The concepts of national identity and loyalty are complex. Most countries are multinational, so many people may identify with and have loyalty to more than one country.	No change required.
8B.12c	We've replaced the term 'failed state' with 'fragile state'.	DE&I	The term 'failed state' is a political term used to justify interventions. It is absolutist and doesn't reflect the fact that all countries are on a continuum of development. The term 'fragile states' recognises this continuum and encourages more nuanced discussions.	Minor change.