

GCSE Geography A

Exam Insights May/June 2024



Welcome to this Professional Development Session

- Sixteenth years of teaching in London state secondary schools
- Worked in four schools in north, east and west London boroughs
- I have been a Geography Teacher for 16 years, including being a Head of Department, Lead Practitioner and currently I am an Assistant Headteacher
- Pearson examiner for GCSE and International GCSE Geography for 15 years.
- Currently I am Team Leader for GCSE Geography A Papers 1 and 2, Principal Examiner for International GCSE Geography Paper 1, and Examiner for International GCSE Geography Paper 2 and International GCSE Pakistan Studies Paper 2.



GCSE Geography A: Exam Insights May/June 2024

This training is for teachers of the Pearson Edexcel GCSE Geography A specification and will provide feedback and insights on the May/June 2024 exam series. The session will focus on the performance of some of the key questions in the series and provide analysis to support. The session will point out key statistical performance data that may help with your planning for the year ahead.

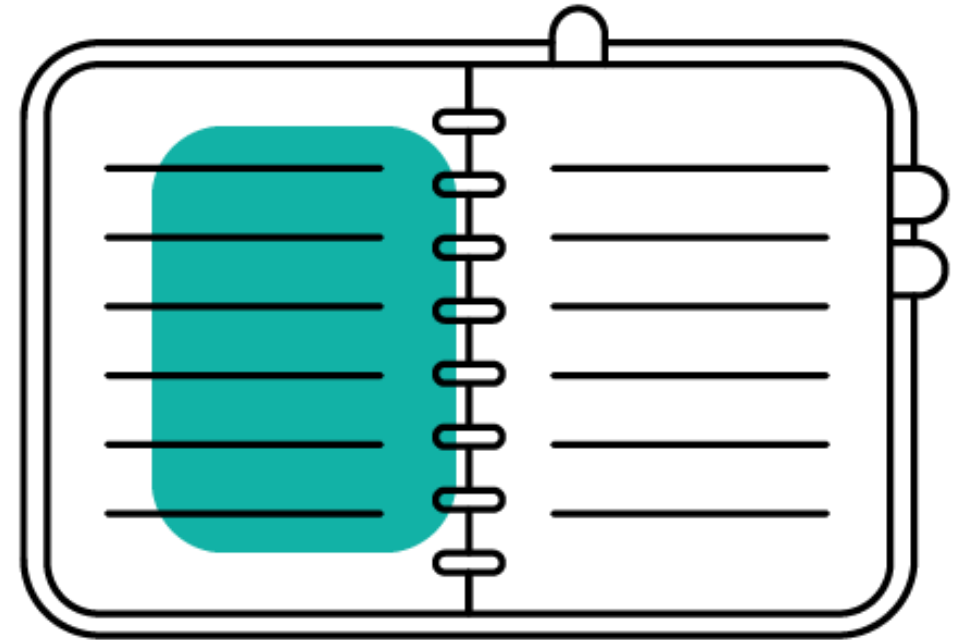
Delegates will:

- receive feedback on the performance of candidates in the May/June 2024 exam series
- consider the variation of candidates' performance on different questions and explore why performance varies
- discuss the Examiner's Report
- address common issues and FAQs.
- a reminder the examiners reports can be found on the Pearson website:

[Geography A \(9–1\) from 2016 | Pearson qualifications](#)

Agenda

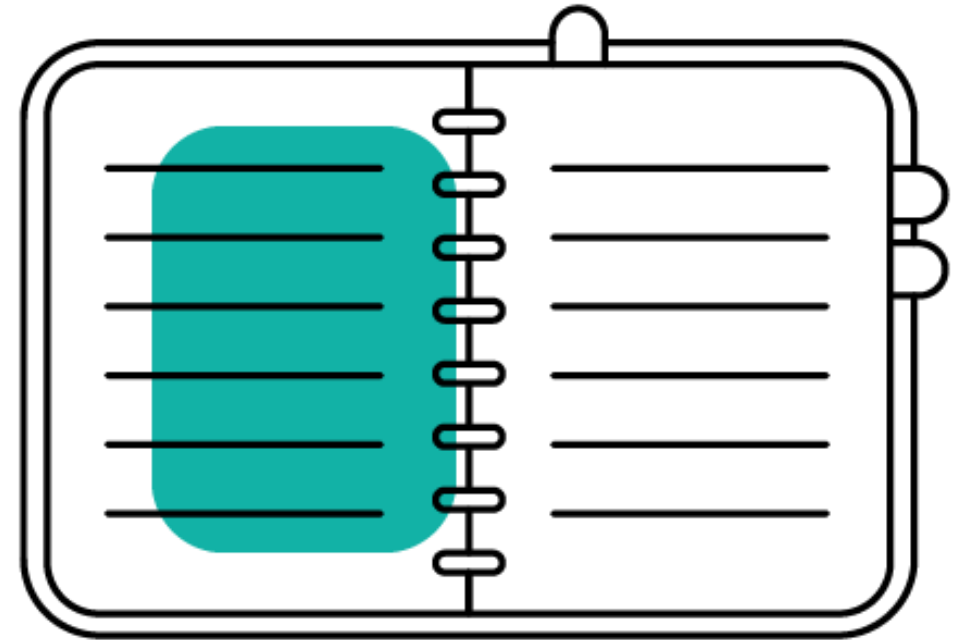
1. Welcome and Introduction
2. Overview of exam performance
3. Analysis of 2024 examination papers
4. Common mistakes and tips/ideas for how to avoid them
5. Conclusion/summary
6. Q&A
7. Subject Advisor support/future events



Improving the accessibility of our assessments

This year there were some changes made with the aim of increasing accessibility:

- The 4-mark explain questions were $(1+1) + (1+1)$
- The SPaG marks were move to Section B on Paper 1 and 2
- Added instruction to remind candidates to refer to resources in their responses in our 8-mark 'Examine' and certain Explain/Suggest questions.



Overview of exam performance



Overview of exam performance

Geography A													
Overall grade boundaries			Max Mark	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	U
1GA0	Geography A	Subject	256	209	193	177	157	138	119	84	50	16	0
Paper(s) 01 02 03													

Geography A													
Notional component grade boundaries			Max Mark	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	U
1GA0	Geography A	Raw	94	74	68	63	55	48	41	28	16	4	0
Paper 01													
1GA0	Geography A	Raw	94	73	67	62	54	47	40	28	16	5	0
Paper 02													
1GA0	Geography A	Raw	64	59	54	49	44	40	36	26	16	7	0
Paper 03													

GCSE Geography A																		
	9		8		7		6		5		4		3		2		1	
	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024	2023
Pearson Edexcel A	6.7	6.5	16.3	15.4	28.5	26.9	43	40.9	56.1	54.7	67.4	66.9	81.9	81.6	92.4	92	98.3	98

Analysis of 2024 examination papers



Analysis of Paper 1 – The Physical Environment

- Candidates use of resources (AO4) continues to improve year on year.
- Candidates find applying their knowledge and understanding (AO3) challenging.
- Candidates find achieving the third mark on 3-mark 'explain one' questions a challenge.
- Candidates are losing marks on the maths/stats questions.
- Incorrect case studies used.
- Increase in rubric error this series.

Student responses – Examine

AO3

AO4

(d) Study Figures 2b and 2c in the Resource Booklet.

Examine the role of different physical processes in the formation of the coastal landforms shown in Figures 2b and 2c.

You must use evidence from Figures 2b and 2c in your answer.

(8) 3 Q02d

First form is a ~~stack~~ **stack**. This is where all the ~~majority~~ rocks is stacked up on its self. In this case **chalk**. Next is a **cave**. The water slowly erodes away at the base of the cliff. The most common area that is eroded away first is the middle due to any water ~~that~~ eroding the sides have a quicker path ~~to~~ to splash away. After eroding the centre, a small gap called a cave forms. Then

comes an **arch**, water has started to erode the top of the cave, causing the gap to increase in ~~length~~ ~~2nd~~ size. Lastly, comes 2 smaller stacks. Eventually the piece of rock connecting the arch loses all structure and support and collapses. ~~After~~ ~~that~~ Lastly, comes 2 stacks, where the stack finally collapses due to erosion.

Student responses – Examine

A03

A04

Examine the role of different physical processes in the formation of the coastal landforms shown in Figures 2b and 2c.

You must use evidence from Figures 2b and 2c in your answer.

(8)7 Q02d

The Old Harry Rocks are located at OS 825 to the north-east of Ballard Point as seen in Figure 2c. Figure 2b states the Dorset coastline is discordant so consists of both hard and soft rock. It also states the Old Harry Rocks are formed from chalk which is a sedimentary rock type. They have been affected by mass movement processes such as sliding and slumping. They have also been affected by a range of erosional processes such as hydraulic action and abrasion.

As these rocks are made of chalk, they are more vulnerable to erosion and weathering. The rocks contain faults and joints which widen and deepen over time due to continuous abrasion and hydraulic action. This leads to the formation of an arch as seen in Figure 2b. Biological weathering due to the vegetation seen on top of the rock in Figure 2b weakens the rock even further, causing the arch to collapse which forms a stack as seen in Figure 2b as well.

In conclusion, erosion is the most significant physical process in the formation of the arch and stack seen in Figure 2b as it is the main reason why the faults in the rock get deeper and wider over time.

Student responses – Explain **one** (3-mark)

(ii) Explain **one** reason why rainfall totals vary across the UK.

You must use evidence from Figure 5b in your answer.

(3) **1** Q05bii

Areas of prevailing wind receive heavier rainfall.

Student responses – Explain **one** (3-mark)

(ii) Explain **one** reason why rainfall totals vary across the UK.

You must use evidence from Figure 5b in your answer.

(3) 3 Q05bli

Figure 5b shows a greater amount of rainfall along the west and north of the UK as above 100 mm on average compared to the south-east of the UK as below 100 mm on average. This is due to the west and north of the UK having a higher relief of land which means more air is rising to form clouds, leading to more rainfall.

(Total for Question 5 = 7 marks)

6

Student responses – Incorrect case study

In this question, four of the marks awarded will be for your spelling, punctuation, grammar and for your use of specialist terminology.

(h) Assess the importance of the different impacts of tropical cyclones in a named emerging or developing country.

Named emerging or developing country

California

2 Q06h
(8) 2 Q6hSp

AO2

AO3

Tropical cyclones cause many economic impacts as it destroys homes, buildings and schools. This all will need to be recovered. Crops are also destroyed due to the wind. Many people are left with little or no food. Some people may also get injured or may even die to the impacts.

Math/Stats Errors

(ii) Calculate the median temperature shown in Figure 7a.

Answer to **one** decimal place.

You must show your working in the space below.

8, 11, 12, 13, 16, 17, 19, 21, 30, 33, 40, 42

(2) 0 Q07bii

$$17 + 19 = 36$$

$$\frac{36}{2} = 18$$

18 °C

(e) Study Figure 7b in the Resource Booklet.

Calculate the percentage of the UK's woodland found in Wales.

Answer to **one** decimal place.

You must show your working in the space below.

(2) 1 Q07e

$$\frac{3100}{32370} = 9.5767\%$$
$$= 9.6\%$$

9.6 %

Analysis of Paper 2 – The Human Environment

- 8-mark exam questions had similar performance to last year.
- Candidate performance is stronger on the 'explain' two resource-based questions (AO2 and AO3).
- Candidate performance is weaker on the 'explain' two questions without a resource (AO1 and AO2).
- Compare questions there is a mark reserved for using data.
- Candidates need to read questions carefully to ensure their response is written from the correct perspective.
- Key terms – there are teacher/student friendly glossaries on the Pearson website.
- Graph questions left blank.

Student responses – Evaluate

AO2

AO3

In this question, up to four additional marks will be awarded for your spelling, punctuation, grammar and use of specialist terminology.

- (f) Evaluate whether, in a named developing or emerging country, the positive impacts of rapid development outweigh the negative impacts.

3 Q02f
(8) 2 Q2fSP

Named developing or emerging country

~~name~~ Mexico

Due to the rapid development in ~~Mexico~~ ^{Mexico}
~~for example Mexico city~~ Mexico city
~~there~~ there is a rapid increase in population
growth, which is negative because ~~the~~ it
puts more stress on the Government and
can affect the quality of life but it
~~also~~ also brings in more workers which
can be positive.

rapid development is also positive
as it can improve the
quality of life which is
good for the residents but it
can also be affected negatively
as the quality of life can be
worsened due to over population.

Another negative impact is that
the ~~gov~~ Government might be

spending substantial amounts of
money which can lead to them running
out of money and having to borrow
from other countries which would lead
to debt.

To conclude the negative impacts
outweigh the positive impacts
of rapid development.

Student responses – Evaluate

AO2

AO3

In this question, up to four additional marks will be awarded for your spelling, punctuation, grammar and use of specialist terminology.

- (f) Evaluate whether, in a named developing or emerging country, the positive impacts of rapid development outweigh the negative impacts.

8 Q02f
(8) 4 Q2FSF

Named developing or emerging country

India

The positive impacts of rapid development consist of companies decentralising their business and moving an asset of their company to an emerging country like India, due to the lower taxes and longer working hours. TNC's are attracted to the developing region due to the English speaking population, which means there is more direct investment and therefore more jobs are created and therefore more tax is paid to the Government which therefore means that the Government can pay more money on things like education and health. This means the life expectancy increases and the quality of life increases. However, the threat of outsourcing the business is that it is footloose, which means that the company can move at any time if there is another country with lower taxes and more working hours. This is risky as therefore if this does happen, people will lose their jobs and crime rates will therefore increase. The rural periphery will also be outcast which is harmful due to the substance farming and low connectivity, which means TNC's are not attracted to the region due to the low literacy rates and more people will leave rural areas and this causes the brain drain and overcrowding of urban areas. However, the presence of TNC's impact development more positively and therefore mean that the country progresses. Maharashtra has an average income of 930 pounds per month compared to \$75 in

Bihar, the rural periphery. The literacy rate in Bihar is 35% compared to 99% in Maharashtra. The fertility rate is much higher in Maharashtra.

I think that in this case though, the positive do outweigh the negatives.

The negatives of rapid development can consist of poor sanitation and poor housing and the establishment of shanty towns. The authorities cannot deal with the growing demand for housing. This means that

the place becomes contaminated. Growing population also puts a strain on resources, with the supply being depleted due to the growing demand for it. I believe that this is crucial in the impacts of rapid development.

However, the opening of the markets in 1990 meant that FDI was available and countries could trade with India. It joined the WTO

and therefore guaranteed a market for goods. Also, there was an increase in the tertiary sector in presence of the TNC's which meant more money could be spent on services which increases the wealth of the service sector.

The growing of factories means that there is an environmental strain because the negative impacts of the secondary sector is that air pollution increases due to the use of fossil fuels, which is very harmful and kills 5 million people in India per year. Also, factory owners do not abide by the working hours rule which puts a strain on the workers and also do not abide

by the wages, which decreases quality of life. This is negative for development because quality of life decreases.

In conclusion, I think that the negatives outweigh the positives because the TNC's are not a permanent solution to poverty and therefore the effectiveness is undermined by this temporary solution.

Student responses – Assess

AO2

AO3

(d) Assess the reasons why individuals and organisations may have different views about the sustainable use of water resources.

(8) 3 Q05d

The most important reason is

Some people may not like the policies that they have to follow e.g. have to have short gardens and may disagree with them and they might not follow the rules.

~~Another~~ Another important reason

is some organisations may end that the methods are not effective and may want to use other

methods that are more helpful and more effective.

The least important reason is some people may not like the different like the methods as they can be expensive which can lead to a tax increase so the government can have more money which means they will have to pay more tax.

To conclude people have many different views on sustainable water use and some are more important than the others.

(Total for Question 5 = 20 marks) 8

Student responses – Assess

A02

A03

(d) Assess the reasons why individuals and organisations may have different views about the sustainable use of energy resources.

(8) 7 Q04d

There are many stakeholders opinions about the use of energy sources. For example, in favour of using renewable energy sources is Friends of the Earth Charity. They believe using clean and efficient resources like wind and solar and think that nuclear is very unsustainable for the Earth and can cause another nuclear disaster like Chernobyl. The radioactivity is harmful and can cause damage to ecosystems for thousands of years. They believe the use of coal and oil and gas can cause many environmental problems, like the creation of SO₂ and CO₂ which can cause acid rain and rise in global temperatures and also the creation of a waste heap for coal which can become unstable and collapse. Oil can also cause damage to ecosystems and also contaminate the water supply which can cause damage to humans. They hold this view because they are an ecological charity who want to prevent climate change and therefore stand firmly against using non renewables.

Another view is that of a resident living near wind turbines. They believe that these are inefficient because they create visual and noise pollution which can affect their daily routine and their quality of life. It can also kill many birds and impact bird migration, which means that ecosystems are damaged. 400,000 birds were killed last year due to this. They also believe that wind turbines are reliant on the weather

which can impact their efficiency. Solar panels are also like this and don't work in the dark. They are also hard to dispose because the battery is radioactive due to the containment of chemicals in the battery which means they have to be stored underground for many years. This means that houses near turbines don't agree with them and want the implementation of non renewables as a more efficient energy source and with more efficiency.

The British Government also believes that they have to agree with the Paris Agreement, which was started to help reduce global temperatures due to carbon emissions. However, the implementation of renewables like hydroelectric are very expensive as well as nuclear which means that they continue to use non renewables due to the inefficiency and cost of them. Also, the English weather impacts the efficiency of solar panels which means they are not used. They have also banned fracking which means that water does not become polluted. This means that they still create

emissions because of this.

Lastly, a Quadra employee would be joined because it is a fracking company and therefore when it was banned, he lost his livelihood and his salary. This means he has different views to someone working in an ecological charity.

In conclusion, I believe that there are different reasons for the different views like cost and also the efficiency of non renewables compared to solar power.

Student responses – Explain **two** (with a resource)

(v) Suggest **two** advantages of the A35 Redbridge Causeway project.

Use evidence from Figure 2c in your answer.

(4)3 Q02ev

Advantage 1

Improve development and raise income of business as it would attract tourist to the new forest national park this would lead to economically positive things for families, shops ect...

Advantage 2

This will also provide job opportunities as they may need new shops, petrol station near the bridge, but also on the other side. This would improve economics and give people an income.

Student responses – Explain **two** (with a resource)

(v) Suggest **two** advantages of the A35 Redbridge Causeway project.

Use evidence from Figure 2c in your answer.

(4) Q02ev

Advantage 1

The connectivity of the region is improving which means it takes less time to reach places like the CBD. The improvement in connectivity will be good for the citizens.

Advantage 2

Investment is encouraged and more and more companies will be attracted to it like TNCs which means the city earns more economic income and jobs are created which reduces unemployment.

Student responses – Explain **two** (without a resource)

(d) Explain **two** historical factors that have led to global variations in the level of development.

(4) 0 Q02d

1 One historical factor is where they were built so if they are built in a bad spot e.g. Mexico City which is sinking can affect the quality of life and future in the city.

2

Student responses – Explain **two** (without a resource)

(d) Explain **two** historical factors that have led to global variations in the level of development.

(4) 4 Q02d

- 1 Colonialism has led to global variations because in India, ~~the~~ artisans were banned which reduced development and impacted their population. The colonialists used their resources and India was a closed economy so it could not trade. Mumbai was the ~~centered~~ ^{the} cotton trade.
- 2 The caste system meant there were variations due to the untouchables being stuck in a cycle of poverty and therefore remained like this and increased the inequality. It is deep rooted in Indian culture.

Analysis of Paper 3 – Geographical Investigations: Fieldwork and UK Challenges

- Candidate responses to familiar fieldwork questions has improved.
- 'Explain one' method is a different demand to 'Describe one' method.
- Sampling strategies.
- Candidate responses to unfamiliar fieldwork improved.
- Candidates gained higher marks on Q5 UK Challenges than in previous years.

Describe / Explain **one** method

- (a) (i) Describe **one** fieldwork method that could have been used by the students to measure sediment size.

(20 Q02ai)

Pebble analysis is choosing rocks at different parts of the beach and measuring its length.

- (ii) Explain **one** disadvantage of using this fieldwork method.

(20 Q02aii)

Students are prone to pick up bigger rocks which may alter the results

Describe / Explain **one** method

- (a) (i) Describe **one** fieldwork method that could have been used by the students to measure sediment size.

✓ (2) Q02ai

By using random sampling along a transect, collect rocks then use either a ruler to measure the length and width of the rock or use a specific device that measures it more precisely for you.

- (ii) Explain **one** disadvantage of using this fieldwork method.

✓ (2) Q02aii

The results can vary due to human error of misreading the measurements on ruler / device used therefore leading to varying results which reduces the ~~accuracy~~ reliability of investigation.

Common mistakes and tips/ideas for how to avoid them



Common mistakes across all papers






Exam technique reasons:




- Writing style for 'assess' and 'evaluate' command words (8-mark questions).
- 4-mark (2+2) questions without a resource (AO1 and AO2) – breadth of knowledge.
- Developing a chain of reasoning – depth of knowledge.
- Missing out graph completion questions
- Not following the rubric (one decimal place etc, incomplete working) on 'calculate' questions
- Imbalance of AO3 and AO4 content for responses to 'examine' questions
- Rubric issues in terms of completing both optional questions

Content-related reasons:

- Application of knowledge (AO3) – on 'examine' questions – explaining in depth the processes responsible for what is shown in the resource.
- Recall of geographical vocabulary.
- Superficial K+U of detailed content linked to Section C 8-mark questions

Writing style for 'assess' and 'evaluate' command words (8-mark questions)

Command Word	Visual	Definition	AO's
Describe		Give main characteristics of something (AO4) OR state steps in a process (AO2).	AO2 OR AO4
Compare		Give both the similarities and differences of something.	AO2 OR AO4
Explain		Give developed reasons for how or why something happens.	AO2 OR AO1 & AO2 OR AO2 & AO3
Suggest		Use your K&U to explain & justify why something <u>might</u> happen.	AO2 OR AO1 & AO2 OR AO2 & AO3
Examine (8 marks)		Explain how each factor contributes to the formation and how each interrelate (work together) (AO3) using evidence from the resource to support (AO4) and decide which factor(s) contribute most significantly to the formation.	AO3 & AO4

Command Word	Visual	Definition	AO's
Assess (8 marks)		Explain all relevant factors involved (AO2) and weigh-up to decide which is most important (AO3). Explain relevant evidence from figure (AO4) and weigh-up to decide which is most important (AO3).	AO2 & AO3 OR AO3 & AO4 (4 marks per AO)
Evaluate (8 marks)		Weigh-up the pros and cons of something (including evidence to support) (AO2) and reach a justified conclusion (AO3). Weigh-up the pros and cons of information from figure (AO4) and reach a justified conclusion (AO3).	AO2 & AO3 OR AO3 & AO4 (4 marks per AO)
Discuss (12 marks)		Give pros and cons of issue (AO2) and make a judgement (AO3), using evidence from figures to support point(s) (AO4).	AO2 & AO3 AO4 (4 marks per AO)

Assess command word

Explain all relevant factors involved (AO2) and weigh-up to decide which is most important (AO3).



(e) **Assess** the following statement.

'Drought is mainly due to natural causes.'

Other causes of drought....

Hydrological drought can be influenced greatly by human actions such as....

(8)

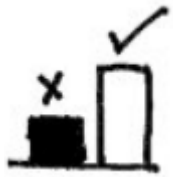
Drought is....

Meteorological drought is....

This means that....

Evaluate command word

Weigh-up the pros and cons of something (including evidence to support) (AO2) and reach a justified conclusion (AO3).



(d) **Evaluate** the following statement.


The impacts of hurricanes (tropical cyclones) are less serious in developed countries than in emerging or developing countries.

Higher GDP/GNI....
Higher HDI score....
Generally higher tax spend on services....

Lower GDP/GNI....
Lower HDI score....
Generally lower tax spend on services....

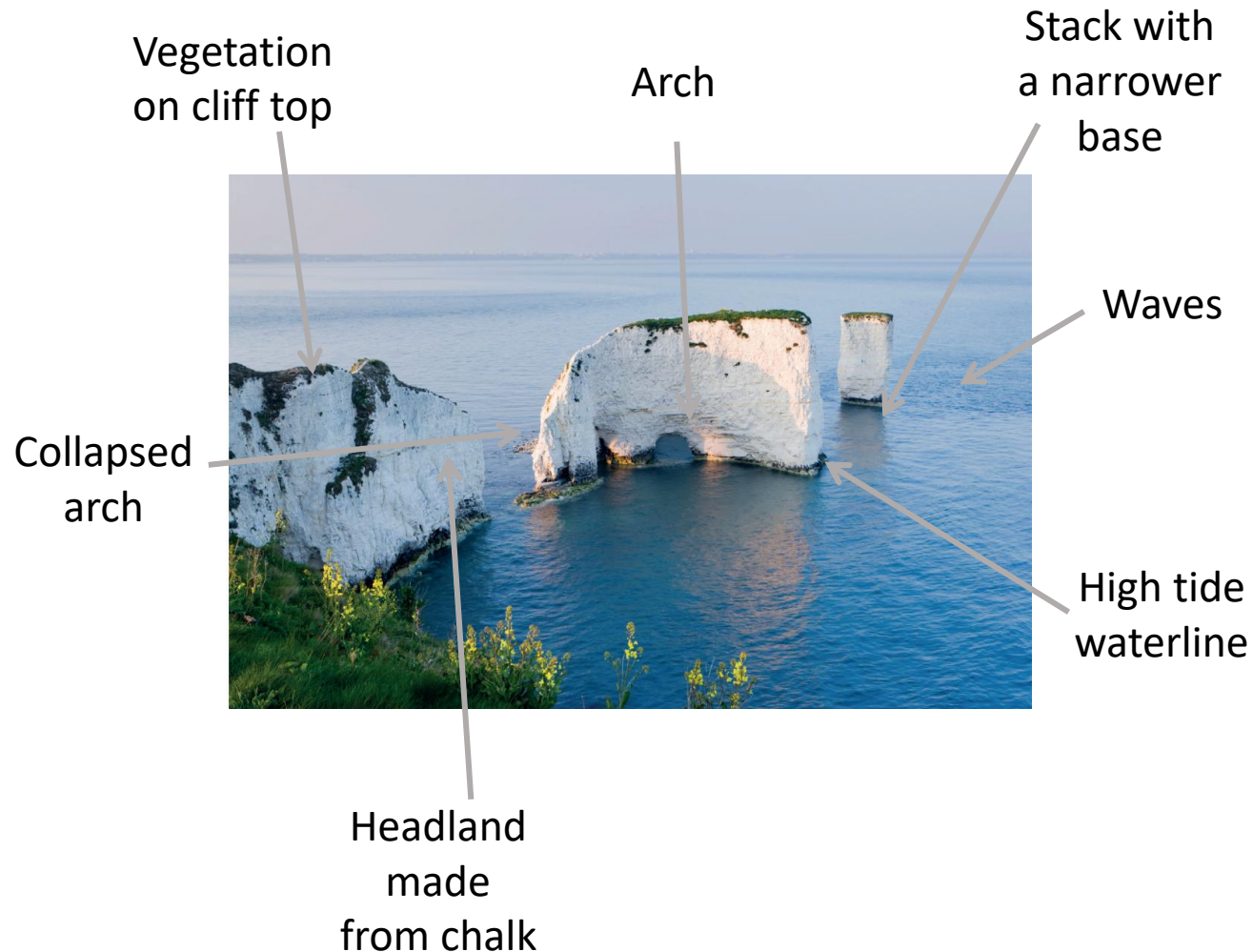
(8)

Application of knowledge (AO3) – on ‘examine’ questions

What can you see in the Figures?	How does geography explain what you see?
<div data-bbox="303 458 1230 1071"></div> <p data-bbox="303 1082 1085 1113">Source: Pearson Edexcel GCSE Geography A Paper 1 2024</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="1378 529 1735 572">1. What geology?<li data-bbox="1378 629 2015 672">2. What landforms can you see?<li data-bbox="1378 729 2186 772">3. What type of wave might be dominant?<li data-bbox="1378 829 2130 972">4. What processes have created these landforms?

Examine the role of physical processes in the formation of the coastal landforms shown.

AO4 – What do we see in the Figure?



AO3 – How does geography explain what you see?

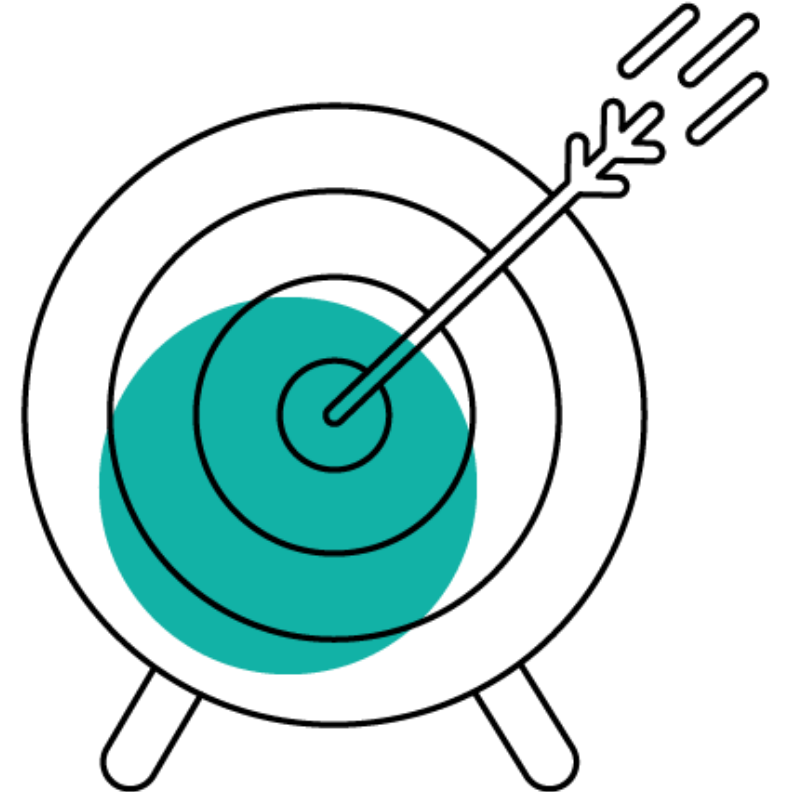
1. Discordant coastline with alternating bands of hard and soft rock.
2. Headland, cave, arch, stack
3. Destructive waves are likely dominant. Headlands are exposed to more wave energy due to refraction of the waves.
4. the dominant processes are erosion (hydraulic action and abrasion), although weathering (biological, chemical) contribute to the landscape along with rock falls (landslides).

Conclusion/summary



Summary

- There are variations on candidate performance across the three papers, with paper 1 having the lowest performance and paper 3 the highest.
- There are some common strengths across the three exam papers:
 - Candidates are using the resources provided more effectively in their responses
- There are some common challenges across the three exam papers:
 - Writing responses to meet the demands of 'assess' and 'evaluate' questions
 - Explain/suggest one 3-mark questions often present a challenge
 - Explain two 4-mark questions without a resource often present a challenge.

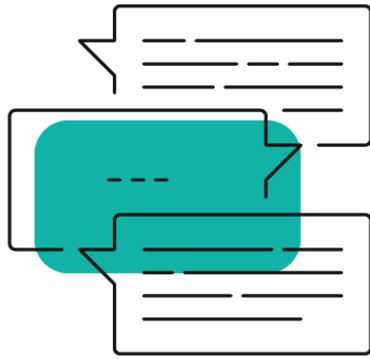




Question and answer
session

Subject Advisor Support

Our subject advisors are experts in their fields and are here to support you throughout the year.



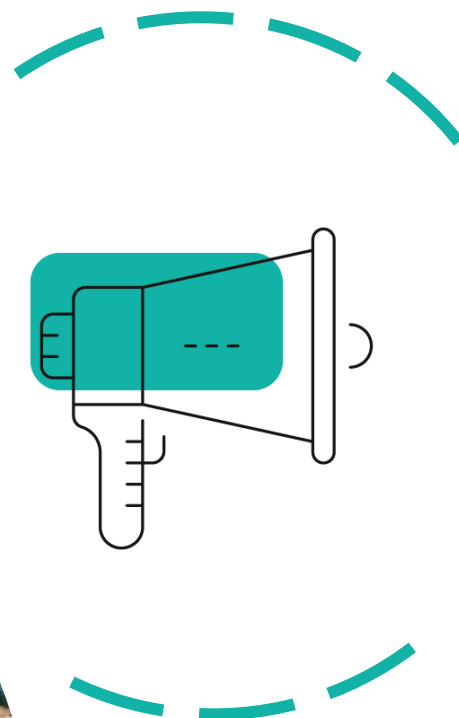
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Following this event, you will receive an invitation to share your thoughts about the session. Your feedback is invaluable to us, as it helps us tailor our professional development materials to better meet your needs. Please don't hesitate to let us know what you'd like to see more of and what areas you think could be improved.



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