

# Edexcel GCSE Geography A

## Comparing the 2012 AQA GCSE Geography A specification with the new 2016 Edexcel Geography A specification

This document is designed to help you compare the existing 2012 AQA GCSE Geography A specification (9030) with the new 2016 Edexcel GCSE Geography A specification.

The document gives an overview, at the topic level, of where the material covered in the existing AQA GCSE Geography A specification can be found in the new Edexcel 2016 Edexcel GCSE Geography A specification.

The following tables then give a more detailed breakdown of the Edexcel Geography A specification, and highlight areas of difference. These will help you to see where material that you currently teach is not present in the AQA specification; or where the Edexcel specification incorporates material that is new to you.

The 2016 Edexcel Geography A specification is split into three content components.

### **Component 1: The Physical Environment, 37.5% of the qualification**

- Topic 1 The changing landscapes of the UK – including a choice of two from coastal landscapes, river landscapes and glacial landscapes
- Topic 2 Weather hazards and climate change
- Topic 3 Ecosystems, biodiversity and management

Written examination: 1 hour and 30 minutes, 94 marks

### **Component 2: The Human Environment, 37.5% of the qualification**

- Topic 4 Changing cities
- Topic 5 Global development
- Topic 6 Resource management – including a choice of either energy resource management or water resource management

Written examination: 1 hour and 30 minutes, 94 marks

### **Component 3: Geographical Investigations: Fieldwork and UK Challenges, 25% of the qualification**

- Topic 7 Geographical investigations – fieldwork
- Topic 8 Geographical investigations – UK challenges

Written examination, 1 hour and 15 minutes, 64 marks

### **Our free support includes:**

- a dedicated Geography Adviser, Jon Wolton
- additional GCSE Geography A specimen papers
- student exemplars with assessment commentary
- mock marking training
- Getting Started Guide and course planners for a two-year and three-year GCSE
- schemes of work and topic packs for every topic
- support with embedding high quality fieldwork into teaching

- Thinking Geographically: Maths and statistics – based on the proven approach of Pearson Maths
- Thinking Geographically: Literacy – based on the proven approach of Pearson English: Grammar for Writing
- Getting Ready to Teach training events.

## Overview of content

2012 AQA GCSE Geography A	2016 Edexcel GCSE Geography A
Geographical and ICT Skills – currently assessed in both the written examination and the Controlled Assessment.	The geographical and ICT skills that are identified on pages 26–27 of the current AQA specification are included within the 'geographic, mathematics and statistics skills' in the new specification. These skills may be assessed across any of the examined components. Some geographical skills are specific to particular subject content; these are indicated in the 'integrated skills' sections within the topics throughout the specification.
<b>Unit 1: Physical Geography (90301F/H)</b>	
<b>The Restless Earth</b> The Earth's crust is unstable, especially at plate margins.	N/A
Unique landforms occur at plate margins.	N/A
People use these landforms as a resource and adapt to the conditions within them.	N/A
Volcanoes are hazards resulting from tectonic activity. Their primary and secondary effects are positive as well as negative. Responses change in the aftermath of an eruption.	N/A
Supervolcanoes are on a much bigger scale than other volcanoes and eruption would have global consequences.	N/A
Earthquakes occur at constructive, destructive and conservative plate margins.	N/A
The effects of earthquakes and responses to them differ due to contrasts in levels of wealth.	N/A
Tsunamis are a specific secondary effect and can have devastating effects in coastal areas.	N/A
<b>Rocks, Resources and Scenery</b> Geological time is on a different scale from human time.	N/A
Rocks belong to one of three groups. Their formation is linked by the rock cycle.	<b>1.1</b> There are geological variations within the UK
Rocks are susceptible to weathering. The type of weathering that is most effective is determined by the composition of the rock and the climate.	<b>1.3</b> A variety of physical processes interact to shape coastal landscapes <b>1.7</b> A variety of physical processes interact to shape river landscapes
Different rocks create contrasting landforms and landscapes – a study of granite; chalk and clay and Carboniferous limestone.	<b>1.1</b> There are geological variations within the UK
Granite; chalk and clay and Carboniferous limestone provide resources to extract, land to farm on and unique scenery for tourism.	<b>1.2</b> A number of physical and human processes work together to create distinct UK landscapes
Demand for resources has led to quarrying. This is an important issue and has led to conflict and	N/A

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debate.	
Impact of quarrying on the environment can be reduced by careful, sustainable management.	N/A
<p><b>Challenge of Weather and Climate</b> The characteristics of the UK climate can be explained by its global position.</p>	<b>2.4</b> The UK has a distinct climate which has changed over time
Depressions and anticyclones have an important and contrasting influence on UK weather.	N/A
UK weather is becoming more extreme. This has an impact on human activity that may be positive or negative.	N/A
There is a debate about the evidence for and causes of global climate change.	<b>2.2</b> The global climate was different in the past and continues to change due to natural causes <b>2.3</b> Global climate is now changing as a result of human activity
The consequences of global climate change will be significant and change the way we live.	<b>2.3</b> Global climate is now changing as a result of human activity
There must be an international/national/local, united response to the threat of global climate change.	<b>8.4</b> The UK's climate change challenges
Tropical revolving storms are a major climatic hazard. The effects of and responses to tropical revolving storms vary between areas of contrasting levels of wealth.	<b>2.5</b> Tropical cyclones develop under specific conditions and in certain locations <b>2.6</b> There are various impacts of and responses to tropical cyclones depending on a country's level of development
<p><b>Living World</b> An ecosystem is made up of plants and animals and the physical factors affecting them (climate and soil). These different parts interrelate and depend on each other. There is a balance between the different parts.</p>	<b>3.4</b> Tropical rainforests show a range of distinguishing features <b>3.6</b> Deciduous woodlands show a range of distinguishing features
<p>Different ecosystems are found in different parts of the world due to the influence of climate and soils. The vegetation adapts to the climate and soils and is in harmony with it.</p>	<b>3.1</b> Large-scale ecosystems are found in different parts of the world and are important
Temperate deciduous woodlands are used for a variety of reasons. They provide examples of successful, sustainable management	<b>3.6</b> Deciduous woodlands show a range of distinguishing features <b>3.7</b> Deciduous woodlands provide a range of goods and services some of which are under threat
Tropical rainforest is removed for a range of reasons. This has economic, social, political and environmental repercussions.	<b>3.5</b> Tropical rainforests provide a range of goods and services some of which are under threat
Tropical rainforests need to be managed sustainably. International co-operation is needed.	<b>3.5</b> Tropical rainforests provide a range of goods and services some of which are under threat
Hot deserts provide opportunities for economic development.	N/A
<p><b>Water on the Land</b> The shape of river valleys changes as rivers flow downstream due to the dominance of different processes.</p>	<b>1.7</b> A variety of physical processes interact to shape river landscapes
Distinctive landforms result from different processes as rivers flow downstream.	<b>1.8</b> Erosion and deposition interacting with geology create distinctive landforms in river landscapes

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The amount of water in a river fluctuates due to a number of reasons.	<b>1.7</b> A variety of physical processes interact to shape river landscapes
Rivers flood due to a number of physical and human causes. Flooding appears to be an increasingly frequent event.	<b>1.9</b> Human activities can lead to changes in river landscapes which affect people and the environment
The effects of and responses to floods vary between areas of contrasting levels of wealth.	<b>8.3</b> The UK's landscape challenges
There is discussion about the costs and benefits of hard and soft engineering and debate about which is the better option.	<b>1.9</b> Human activities can lead to changes in river landscapes which affect people and the environment
Rivers are managed to provide a water supply. There is a variety of issues resulting from this.	<b>6.9</b> There are differences between the water consumption patterns of developing countries and developed countries <b>6.12</b> Management and sustainable use of water resources are required at a range of spatial scales from local to international
<b>Ice on the Land</b> The amount of ice on a global and continental level has changed in the past.	N/A
The amount of ice depends on the glacial budget. This has seen a loss since 1950 and there are seasonal changes due to fluctuations in temperature.	N/A
Ice is a powerful force in shaping the land as a result of weathering, erosion, transportation and deposition.	<b>1.11</b> A variety of physical processes interact to shape upland glaciated landscapes
Distinctive landforms result from different processes.	<b>1.12</b> Glacial erosion and deposition create distinctive landforms within upland glaciated landscapes
Landscapes that are actively affected by snow and ice attract tourists. This leads to conflict and issues over the use of such areas.	<b>1.13</b> Human activities can lead to changes in upland glaciated landscapes
Glacial retreat can pose a threat to the economies of areas relying on tourism and result in damage to fragile environments.	N/A
<b>The Coastal Zone</b> The coast is shaped by weathering, mass movement, erosion, transportation and deposition.	<b>1.3</b> A variety of physical processes interact to shape coastal landscapes
Distinctive landforms result from different processes.	<b>1.4</b> Coastal erosion and deposition create distinctive landforms within the coastal landscape
Rising sea level will have important consequences for people living in the coastal zone.	<b>2.3</b> Global climate is now changing as a result of human activity
Coastal erosion can lead to cliff collapse. This causes problems for people and the environment.	<b>1.4</b> Coastal erosion and deposition create distinctive landforms within the coastal landscape <b>1.5</b> Human activities can lead to changes in coastal landscapes which affect people and the environment
There is discussion about how the coast should be managed. There is debate about the costs and benefits of 'hard' and 'soft' engineering.	<b>1.5</b> Human activities can lead to changes in coastal landscapes which affect people and the environment <b>8.3</b> The UK's landscape challenges
Coastal areas provide a unique environment and habitat. There is a need for conservation and this leads to conflict with other land uses.	N/A

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<b>Unit 2: Human Geography (90302F/H)</b>	
<b>Population Change</b> Over time the global population increases and the population structures of different countries change.	N/A
A range of strategies has been tried by countries experiencing rapid population growth.	N/A
An ageing population impacts on the future development of a country.	N/A
Population movements impact on both the source regions of migrants and the receiving countries.	N/A
<b>Changing Urban Environments</b> Urbanisation is a global phenomenon.	<b>4.1</b> Urbanisation is a global process
Urban areas have a variety of functions and land uses.	<b>4.3</b> The context of the chosen UK city influences its functions and structure
There are aspects of urban living in a richer part of the world that need careful planning in order to support the population and environment of cities and towns.	<b>8.1</b> The UK's resource consumption and environmental sustainability challenge <b>8.2</b> The UK settlement, population and economic challenges
Rapid urbanisation has led to the development of squatter settlements and an informal sector to the economy.	<b>4.7</b> The character of the chosen developing country or emerging country city is influenced by its fast rate of growth <b>4.8</b> Rapid growth, within the chosen developing country or emerging country city, results in a number of challenges that need to be managed
Rapid urbanisation in a poorer part of the world requires the management of the environmental problems caused.	<b>4.7</b> The character of the chosen developing country or emerging country city is influenced by its fast rate of growth <b>4.8</b> Rapid growth, within the chosen developing country or emerging country city, results in a number of challenges that need to be managed
Attempts can be made to ensure that urban living is sustainable.	<b>4.5</b> Globalisation and economic change create challenges for the chosen UK city that require long-term solutions <b>8.1</b> The UK's resource consumption and environmental sustainability challenge <b>8.2</b> The UK settlement, population and economic challenges
<b>Changing Rural Environments</b> The rural-urban fringe is under intense pressure due to urban sprawl and the increasing mobility of the population.	N/A
Remote rural areas have undergone social and economic changes.	N/A
Attempts should be made to ensure that rural living is sustainable.	N/A
Commercial farming in favoured agricultural areas is subject to a number of human influences.	N/A
Rapid urbanisation in a poorer part of the world requires the management of the environmental problems caused.	N/A
Sub-tropical and tropical rural areas are increasingly subject to change and conflict.	N/A
<b>The Development Gap</b> Contrasts in development means that the world	<b>5.1</b> Definitions of development vary as do attempts to measure it

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can be divided up in many ways.	<b>5.2</b> The level of development varies globally
Global inequalities are exacerbated by physical and human factors.	<b>5.1</b> Definitions of development vary as do attempts to measure it <b>5.2</b> The level of development varies globally
The reduction of global inequalities will require international efforts.	<b>5.4</b> A range of strategies has been used to try to address uneven development
The countries of the enlarged EU show contrasting levels of development that have led to a number of political initiatives aimed at reducing inequalities.	N/A
<b>Globalisation</b> Globalisation is a significant feature of the world in the 21st century.	N/A
Globalisation has meant the development of manufacturing and services across the world.	N/A
The relative importance of manufacturing to different countries is changing.	N/A
The increasing global demand for energy through sustainable and non-sustainable developments.	<b>6.2</b> The patterns of the distribution and consumption of natural resources varies on a global and a national scale <b>8.1</b> The UK's resource consumption and environmental sustainability challenge
Sustainable development must ensure that the environment is protected and that there are sufficient resources for future generations.	<b>6.3</b> Renewable and non-renewable energy resources can be developed <b>6.5</b> There is increasing demand for energy that is being met by renewable and non-renewable resources <b>6.7</b> Management and sustainable use of energy resources are required at a range of spatial scales from local to international
The global search to satisfy the increasing demand for food can have positive and negative repercussions.	<b>6.2</b> The patterns of the distribution and consumption of natural resources varies on a global and a national scale
<b>Tourism</b> The global growth of tourism has seen the exploitation of a range of different environments for holidaymakers.	N/A
Effective management strategies are the key to the continuing prosperity of tourist areas in the UK.	N/A
Mass tourism has advantages for an area but strategies need to be in place to reduce the likelihood of long-term damage.	N/A
Extreme environments are susceptible to environmental damage from the development of tourism.	N/A
Sustainability requires the development of ecotourism.	N/A

## In-depth comparison

2016 Edexcel GCSE Geography A	2012 AQA GCSE Geography A	What's new for you	What you no longer teach
<b>Component 1: The Physical Environment</b>	<b>Unit 1: Physical Geography</b> The Restless Earth (Unit 1)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>× The Earth's crust is unstable, especially at plate margins.</li> <li>× Unique landforms occur at plate margins.</li> <li>× People use these landforms as a resource and adapt to the conditions within them.</li> <li>× Volcanoes are hazards resulting from tectonic activity. Their primary and secondary effects are positive as well as negative. Responses change in the aftermath of an eruption.</li> <li>× Supervolcanoes are on a much bigger scale than other volcanoes and eruption would have global consequences.</li> <li>× Earthquakes occur at constructive, destructive and conservative plate margins.</li> <li>× The effects of earthquakes and responses to them differ due to contrasts in levels of wealth.</li> <li>× Tsunamis are a specific secondary effect and can have devastating effects in coastal areas.</li> </ul>
Topic 1: The changing landscapes of the UK	Rocks, Resources and Scenery, Water on the Land, Ice on the Land and The Coastal Zone (all Unit 1)	<b>New content about geomorphic processes and landscapes, which is a DfE requirement</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ 1.10 Distinctive river landscapes are the outcome of the interaction between physical and human processes</li> <li>✓ 1.14 Distinctive glaciated upland</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>× Geological time is on a different scale from human time.</li> <li>× Demand for resources has led to quarrying. This is an important issue and has led to conflict and debate.</li> <li>× Impact of quarrying on the environment can be reduced by careful, sustainable management.</li> </ul>

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		<p>landscapes are the outcome of the interaction between physical and human</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Processes</li> <li>✓ 1.6 Distinctive coastal landscapes are the outcome of the interaction between physical and human processes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>× The amount of ice on a global and continental level has changed in the past.</li> <li>× The amount of ice depends on the glacial budget. This has seen a loss since 1950 and there are seasonal changes due to fluctuations in temperature.</li> <li>× Glacial retreat can pose a threat to the economies of areas relying on tourism and result in damage to fragile environments.</li> <li>× Coastal areas provide a unique environment and habitat. There is a need for conservation and this leads to conflict with other land uses.</li> </ul>
Topic 2: Weather hazards and climate change	Challenge of Weather and Climate (Unit 1)	<p><b>New content about changing weather and climate, which is a DfE requirement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ 2.1 The atmosphere operates as a global system transferring heat and energy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>× Depressions and anticyclones have an important and contrasting influence on UK weather.</li> <li>× UK weather is becoming more extreme. This has an impact on human activity that may be positive or negative.</li> </ul>
Topic 3: Ecosystems, biodiversity and management	Living World (Unit 3)	<p><b>New content about global ecosystems and biodiversity, which is a DfE requirement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ 3.2 The biosphere is a vital system</li> <li>✓ 3.3 The UK has its own variety of distinctive ecosystems that it relies on</li> <li>✓ 3.4 Tropical rainforests show a range of distinguishing features</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>× An ecosystem is made up of plants and animals and the physical factors affecting them (climate and soil). These different parts interrelate and depend on each other. There is a balance between the different parts.</li> <li>× Hot deserts provide opportunities for economic development.</li> </ul>
<b>Component 2: The Human Environment</b>	<b>Unit 2: Human Geography</b> Population Change, Changing Rural Environments and Tourism (all Unit 2)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>× Over time the global population increases and the population structures of different countries change.</li> </ul>

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>× A range of strategies has been tried by countries experiencing rapid population growth.</li> <li>× An ageing population impacts on the future development of a country.</li> <li>× Population movements impact on both the source regions of migrants and the receiving countries.</li> <li>× The rural-urban fringe is under intense pressure due to urban sprawl and the increasing mobility of the population.</li> <li>× Remote rural areas have undergone social and economic changes.</li> <li>× Attempts should be made to ensure that rural living is sustainable.</li> <li>× Rapid urbanisation in a poorer part of the world requires the management of the environmental problems caused.</li> <li>× Sub-tropical and tropical rural areas are increasingly subject to change and conflict.</li> <li>× The global growth of tourism has seen the exploitation of a range of different environments for holidaymakers.</li> <li>× Effective management strategies are the key to the continuing prosperity of tourist areas in the UK.</li> <li>× Mass tourism has advantages for an area but strategies need to be in place to reduce the likelihood of long-term damage.</li> <li>× Extreme environments are susceptible to environmental damage from the development of tourism.</li> <li>× Sustainability requires the development of ecotourism.</li> </ul>
Topic 4: Changing cities	Topic 2: Changing Urban Environments (Unit 2)	✓ 4.2 The degree of urbanisation varies	

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		across the UK ✓ 4.4 The chosen UK city is being changed by movements of people, employment and services	
Topic 5: Global development	The Development Gap (Unit 2)	<b>New content about global economic development issues, which is a DfE requirement</b> ✓ 5.3 Uneven global development has had a range of consequences ✓ 5.4 A range of strategies has been used to try to address uneven development ✓ 5.5 The level of development of the chosen developing or emerging country is influenced by its location and context in the world ✓ 5.6 The interactions of economic, social and demographic processes influence the development of the chosen developing or emerging country ✓ 5.7 Changing geopolitics and technology impact on the chosen developing or emerging country ✓ 5.8 There are positive and negative impacts of rapid development for the people and environment of the chosen developing or emerging country	× The countries of the enlarged EU show contrasting levels of development that have led to a number of political initiatives aimed at reducing inequalities.
Topic 6: Resource management A choice of <b>either</b> 6A Energy resource management <b>or</b> 6B Water resource management	Globalisation (Unit 2)	<b>New content about resources and their management, which is a DfE requirement</b> ✓ 6.1 A natural resource is any feature or part of the environment that can be used to meet human needs ✓ 6.4 To meet demand, countries use energy resources in different proportions. This is called the energy mix	× Globalisation is a significant feature of the world in the 21st century. × Globalisation has meant the development of manufacturing and services across the world. × The relative importance of manufacturing to different countries is changing.

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ 6.6 Meeting the demands for energy resources can involve interventions by different interest groups</li> <li>✓ 6.8 The supply of fresh water supply varies globally</li> <li>✓ 6.10 Countries at different levels of development have water supply problems</li> <li>✓ 6.11 Meeting the demands for water resources could involve technology and interventions by different interest groups</li> </ul>	
Topic 7: Geographical investigations – fieldwork		<p><b>New fieldwork requirements, which is a DfE requirement</b></p> <p>Two geographical investigations each involving fieldwork and research. There is a choice of one from two environments in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ 7A: Investigating physical environments (rivers <b>or</b> coasts) ✓ and</li> <li>✓ 7B: Investigating human landscapes (central/inner urban area <b>or</b> rural settlements).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>× The geographical investigation is no longer completed as a Controlled Assessment and submitted for external moderation; fieldwork is now assessed through a formal examination in Component 3.</li> </ul>
Topic 8: Geographical investigations – UK challenges	Across both units	<p><b>New content about geography of the UK, which is a DfE requirement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ 8.1a Changes in the UK's population in the next 50 years and implications on resource consumption</li> <li>✓ 8.1b Pressures of growing populations on the UK's ecosystems</li> <li>✓ 8.2a The 'two-speed economy' and options for bridging the gap between south east and the rest of the UK</li> <li>✓ 8.2c UK net migration statistics and their reliability and values and attitudes of different stakeholders</li> </ul>	



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		towards migration ✓ 8.3a Approaches to conservation and development of UK National Parks	