

Edexcel GCSE (9-1) and AS/A level Geography

How our assessments give every student the chance to succeed



Introducing our new GCSE and A level exams

- **All our geography courses are designed with 14-19 progression in mind.** Our assessments encourage students to show what they know and understand about geography to the best of their ability.
- **Our assessment structure is straightforward to navigate.** Our extended response mark schemes are explicit about the types of response, structure and skills required.
- **A smooth transition from GCSE to A level.** There is a clear and consistent relationship between command words, mark tariffs and skills across GCSE and AS/A level.

Contents

Developing skilled and successful geographers Page 3

Edexcel GCSE (9-1) Geography A and B

- Structure and features Page 4
- Assessment objectives Page 5
- What assessments will look like Page 6
- Straightforward level-based mark schemes Page 7-8

Edexcel AS/A level Geography

- Structure and features Pages 9-11
- Assessment objectives Page 12
- What assessments will look like Pages 13-18

Command words and their mark tariffs Page 19

Question styles Page 20

Teaching approaches Page 21

Making effective use of the specification Page 24

Tracking and assessing progress Page 25

Free support Page 26-27

Developing skilled and successful geographers

We have talked to hundreds of teachers from schools across the United Kingdom in face-to-face interviews, phone interviews, focus groups and surveys. The Subject Expert Advisory Group that helped develop our specifications and assessments included representatives from the Geographical Association, IoE, examiners, the teaching community and universities. Our assessments have been developed so that transitioning from GCSE to AS to A level is straightforward and meaningful for both teachers and learners.

Consistent paper structures, command words and accessibility for all students

- **Each exam paper has a clear identity.** A physical/human split is used for every set of exams apart from the issues-based GCSE Geography B, which has a local/global approach. All Papers 1 and 2 have equal assessment weighting, marks and exam time, so that students familiar with the GCSE exams understand how their AS and A level exams will be structured.
- **Command words are defined in every specification.** Questions will only ever use a single command word and be linked to a set number of marks, and those that require higher-order thinking skills are used later in each exam to support weaker students and improve their exam confidence.
- **Mark schemes are student friendly.** They demonstrate clearly the range of indicative content that might be expected, and are designed so that all students can access them and understand how to improve their responses.

Developing the ability to think geographically from GCSE through to AS/A level

- **Levels-based mark schemes (LBMS) identify precisely how to meet assessment objectives.** For extended writing, each command word and question style is linked to a particular set of assessment objectives and traits with a set weighting of marks for each, helping students to master their extended writing and improve their exam performance. From GCSE to AS/A level the LBMS are developed in a systematic and meaningful way.
- **Targeted and practical support to help students think geographically and become confident, capable and successful geographers.** We've worked with experts in geography, mathematics and literacy to develop our approach to support materials.
- **Our most comprehensive support offering ever.** Extensive, high quality, practical support will be provided for every specification so that teachers and learners can develop their ability to use the materials effectively and build on their exam success year on year.

Edexcel GCSE (9-1) Geography A and B

Structure and features

Our Edexcel GCSE (9-1) Geography A and B will be assessed through three written exams. We chose this number of papers because you told us:

- each paper provides a clearer focus for students during their revision and in the exam.
- it gives students a greater opportunity to show what they can do.
- three shorter papers mean students are less likely to suffer from exam fatigue.

Geography A: Geographical Themes and Challenges

	The Physical Environment	The Human Environment	Geographical Investigations: Fieldwork and UK Challenges
Content overview	<p>The changing landscapes of the UK</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose 2 from coastal, river or glaciated landscapes <p>Weather hazards and climate change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tropical storms and drought <p>Ecosystems, biodiversity and management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tropical rainforests and temperate deciduous woodlands 	<p>Changing cities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A case study of a UK city and a city in an emerging or developing country <p>Global development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A case study of a developing or emerging country <p>Resource management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose one from Energy or Water 	<p>Fieldwork</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One physical and one human investigation <p>UK Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigation of contemporary UK challenges based on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resource consumption and environmental sustainability • Settlement, population and economics • Landscape • Climate change
Assessment overview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 37.5% ⚖️ 94 marks 🕒 1 hour 30 minutes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 37.5% ⚖️ 94 marks 🕒 1 hour 30 minutes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 25% ⚖️ 64 marks 🕒 1 hour 30 minutes



Geography B: Investigating Geographical Issues

	Global Geographical Issues	UK Geographical Issues	People and Environment Issues – Making Geographical Decisions
Content overview	<p>Hazardous Earth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tropical storms and tectonic hazards <p>Development dynamics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A case study of an emerging country <p>Challenges of an urbanising world</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A case study of a mega city in a developing or emerging country 	<p>The UK's evolving physical landscape</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • coastal and river landscapes and issues • Fieldwork investigation: physical <p>The UK's evolving human landscape</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case study of a dynamic UK city • Fieldwork investigation: human 	<p>People and the biosphere</p> <p>Forests under threat</p> <p>Consuming energy resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All three topics will form the basis of a decision-making exercise.
Assessment overview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 37.5% ⚖️ 94 marks 🕒 1 hour 30 minutes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 37.5% ⚖️ 94 marks 🕒 1 hour 30 minutes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 25% ⚖️ 64 marks 🕒 1 hour 30 minutes



Assessment objectives

AO1	Demonstrate knowledge of locations, places, processes, environments and different scales.	15%
AO2	Demonstrate geographical understanding of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • concepts and how they are used in relation to places, environments and processes; • the interrelationships between places, environment and process. 	25%
AO3	Apply knowledge and understanding to interpret, analyse and evaluate geographical information and issues and to make judgements .	35%
AO4	Select, adapt and use a variety of skills and techniques to investigate questions and issues and communicate findings.	25%

Spotlight on GCSE mark schemes – indicative content

AO1 and AO2 indicative content will show factual information a student would be expected to know and understand.

For example:

“The extraction of oil has environmental impacts.”

AO3 indicative content will show application and higher order cognitive skills. These include (but are not limited to) making judgements, or considering how different contexts could lead to different outcomes. For example:

“Political improvements would include the empowerment of indigenous peoples, a reduction in political corruption and perhaps a stronger international ‘voice’.”

AO4 indicative content will show the use of skills to extract information from resource material. If multiple resources are used for the question, figure references will be included in the indicative content. For example:

“Very few Peruvian people actually live in Amazonia (13%) so negative local impacts are not experienced by many (Introduction and Figure 3).”

[GCSE B: Paper 3 – People and Environment Issues – Making Geographical Decisions]

What assessments will look like

Question 2 from our Edexcel GCSE (9–1) Geography A sample assessment materials demonstrates how we might assess optional sub-topic '1A: Coastal landscapes and processes'. In particular, 2a (iv) is an example of an extended-response question that targets AO3 (4 marks) and AO4 (4 marks).



(Source: thetimes.co.uk/tto/multimedia/archive/00361/117597742_361456c

Figure 1

A diagram showing a stretch of coastline in Southern England

Each question starts with **accessible** items all students can tackle with confidence. The question then **ramps in demand**, finishing with an extended-response item for 8 marks.

Question 2: Coastal landscapes and processes

If you answer Question 2 put a cross in the box .

Coastal landscapes are constantly being changed by different processes.

2 (a) Study Figure 1 in the Resource Booklet.

(i) Identify **one** erosional landform shown in the coastal landscape on Figure 1. (1)

(ii) State **one** type of biological weathering that might have an impact on this landscape. (1)

(iii) Rip rap is an example of hard engineering. Explain **one** way rip rap helps protect coastal landscapes. (2)

'Explain' questions require a justification or exemplification of a point. They will always carry 2, 3 or 4 marks, depending on whether a figure is used or if more than one point is expected.

The 'ramping up' of demand is consistent throughout exam questions and papers for both courses so all students can successfully engage with every part of the exams.

(iv) Study Figure 2. Examine how physical processes work together in the formation of the spit shown in Figure 2. (8)

'Examine' questions will only be found in the Geography A exam papers. They will always be resource based and carry 8 marks (4 marks targeting AO3 and 4 marks targeting AO4).

A diagram showing a stretch of coastline in Southern England

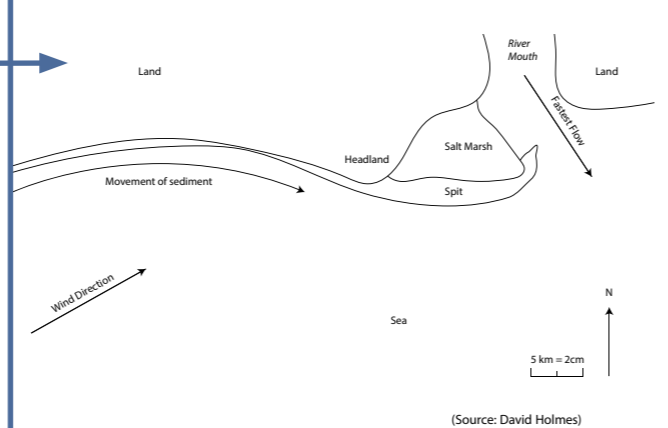


Figure 2

GCSE: straightforward levels-based mark schemes

- The **levels-based mark schemes** used to assess the 8-mark and 12-mark extended-response questions are explicit about the type of response and skills required.
- Our mark schemes classify **level descriptors** as distinct 'traits', so you can see how individual traits progress across levels.
- There's a **consistent approach** across questions that test the same assessment objectives and comparable qualities, so you can focus on the geographical skills and understanding rather than mechanics of individual questions.
- Our mark schemes are **designed in a similar way at AS and A level** too, so students can see how to progress in their geography studies across the Key Stages.

Question number	Indicative content
2(a)(iv)	<p>A03 (4 marks)/A04 (4 marks)</p> <p>A03 Apply understanding of physical processes at the coast: Which physical processes are involved in the formation of a spit? What are the various steps involved in longshore drift? How is the shape of a spit affected, and what specific factors are prevalent in Figure 2?</p> <p>A04 Use geographical skills to interpret information in Figure 2: Consider the geographical direction that various factors are operating from. What features of the spit can be specifically identified in Figure 2?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wave direction is determined by the prevailing wind resulting in the wash proceeds up the beach at an angle to the coast. • Sediment is moved along the coast. The swash pushes sediment up the beach, its direction determined by the prevailing wind. The back wash causes material to move back down the beach at right angles to the coast. • The swash/back wash process produces a zig zag movement of sediment along the coast. Over time, large amounts of material can be transported along the beach. • Where the coast changes direction, material is deposited offshore. Over time, there is a buildup of material off the coast – this forms a spit. Long-shore drift is a dominant process in maintenance of the spit. • Once material moves to the east of the headland, there is a lower energy environment, allowing deposition to occur, which encourages the deposition of fine materials resulting in the creation of mudflats/a salt marsh area. • Over time, the spit can develop a hook/become recurved and its shape is influenced by both river currents/tidal movement and localised wind in the estuary mouth. • The estuary is important in the diagram as it limits the growth of the spit due to the deep water and the currents. • Transportation occurs until a change in direction of the coastline. • The prevailing wind is south-westerly. • The long shore drift is moving west to east. • There is evidence of a narrow strip of beach/sand in front of the mainland (before the headland). • There is fast water flowing out of the river mouth in a north south direction. • The landform is a recurved spit, which curves towards the north/mouth of river estuary. • Behind the spit there is a build-up of sediment forming a salt marsh area.

GCSE: straightforward levels-based mark schemes

Edexcel AS and A level Geography

Structure and features

Edexcel AS Geography will be assessed through two written exams that mirror each other precisely. Edexcel A level Geography will be assessed with three written exams plus an independent investigation.

Edexcel A level Geography Paper 3 has a clear identity so that all students can access the extended writing and synoptic thinking required at this level.

Clear question papers

- Command words are used consistently to assess particular skills, making it clear the type of response that's needed.
- Gradual ramping of demand throughout sections and papers motivates all students to engage with every part of the exams.
- Indicative mark schemes are written for students so that they understand what's required for each assessment objective.

Straightforward levels-based mark schemes

- Our mark schemes classify level descriptors as distinct 'traits', so you can see how individual traits progress across levels.
- There's a consistent approach across questions that test the same assessment objectives and comparable qualities, so you and your students can focus on the geographical skills and understanding rather than mechanics of individual questions.

Synoptic thinking

- At AS the 16-mark synoptic questions are always the final question in each section at AS level (not including section A) so that students have attempted a range of shorter, focused questions before these broader, more demanding questions.
- At A level synoptic thinking is only directly assessed in Paper 3 for A level so that the revision and experience of Papers 1 and 2 help develop the higher order cognitive skills required for the final examination.

Mark schemes will be used consistently for our 8-mark 'Examine' questions in Edexcel GCSE Geography A.

Level descriptors are clear and detailed.

Level	Mark	Descriptor
	0	No rewardable material.
Level 1	1-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attempts to apply understanding to deconstruct information but understanding and connections are flawed. An unbalanced or incomplete argument that provides limited synthesis of understanding. Judgements that are supported by limited evidence. (AO3) • Uses some geographical skills to obtain information with limited relevance and accuracy, which supports few aspects of the argument. (AO4)
Level 2	4-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applies understanding to deconstruct information and provide some logical connections between concepts. An imbalanced argument that synthesises mostly relevant understanding, but not entirely coherently, leading to judgements that are supported by evidence occasionally. (AO3) • Uses geographical skills to obtain accurate information that supports some aspects of the argument. (AO4)
Level 3	7-8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applies understanding to deconstruct information and provide logical connections between concepts throughout. A balanced, well-developed argument that synthesises relevant understanding coherently leading to judgements that are supported by evidence throughout. (AO3) • Uses geographical skills to obtain accurate information that supports all aspects of the argument. (AO4)

Use a variety of skills and techniques (AO4):

Level 2 responses only support some aspects of the argument using information from the figure, whereas Level 3 responses would support all aspects of the argument.

Quality of argument (AO3):


Level 3: A balanced and well-developed argument. In Question 2a (iv), the student must present a coherent understanding of how **all** the processes involved in spit formation are interrelated.

Supported judgements (AO3):

Level 3: Judgements about how this spit was formed. This should always be supported by **specific evidence** from Figure 2, broken down into individual processes. However, a Level 2 answer may only use limited evidence from the figure.

Explore sample assessment materials for both specifications at: www.edexcel.com/geographyassess2016

AS Geography

A minimum of 2 days' fieldwork 

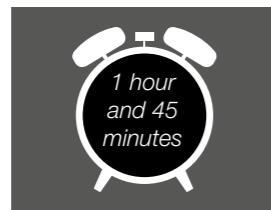
Paper 1: Dynamic Landscapes

Topic 1: Tectonic Processes and Hazards - Tectonic processes, a study of the causes of tectonic hazards, the impact of tectonic activity on people, and responses to tectonic hazards.

Topic 2: Landscape Systems, Processes and Change - An integrated study of processes, landforms and landscapes. A study of one landscape system and the physical and human processes influencing change over time and space.

- Choose one from:
- Option 2a: Glacial Landscapes and Change
 - Option 2b: Coastal Landscapes and Change.

Fieldwork: Physical geography



50% contribution to AS qualification

Total marks 90

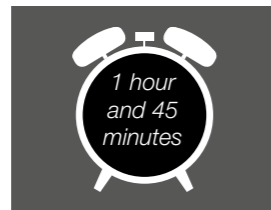
Paper 2: Dynamic Places

Topic 3: Globalisation - A study of globalisation, its causes and consequences for different people and places.

Topic 4: Shaping Places - A study of how and why places are shaped and changed, the meanings and identities attached to different places and the consequences for different people.

- Choose one from:
- Option 4a: Regenerating Places
 - Option 4b: Diverse Places.


Fieldwork: Human geography



50% contribution to AS qualification

Total marks 90

A level Geography

A minimum of 4 days' fieldwork 

Dynamic Landscapes

Topic 1: Tectonic Processes and Hazards - Tectonic processes, a study of the causes of tectonic hazards, the impact of tectonic activity on people, and responses to tectonic hazards.

Topic 2: Landscape Systems, Processes and Change - An integrated study of processes, landforms and landscapes. A study of one landscape system and the physical and human processes influencing change over time and space.

- Choose one from:
- Option 2a: Glacial Landscapes and Change
 - Option 2b: Coastal Landscapes and Change.

Dynamic Places

Topic 3: Globalisation - A study of globalisation, its causes and consequences for different people and places.

Topic 4: Shaping Places - A study of how and why places are shaped and changed, the meanings and identities attached to different places and the consequences for different people.

- Choose one from:
- Option 4a: Regenerating Places
 - Option 4b: Diverse Places.

Physical Systems and Sustainability

Topic 5: The Water Cycle and Water Insecurity - Water cycle, human and natural factors that impact on water cycling, consequences for water security and future water conflicts.

Topic 6: The Carbon Cycle and Energy Security - Carbon cycle, human and natural factors impacting on carbon cycling, the consequences for ecosystems and management strategies.

Human Systems and Geopolitics

Topic 7: Superpowers - Superpowers, the reasons for shifting economic and political power, the impacts of superpowers, influence of superpowers in governing the global commons.

Topic 8: Global Development and Connections

- Choose one from:
- Option 8a: Health, Human Rights and Intervention
 - Option 8b: Migration, Identity and Sovereignty.

Paper 1 Assessment of Dynamic Landscapes and Physical Systems and Sustainability		30% contribution to A level qualification Total marks 105
Paper 2 Assessment of Dynamic Places and Human Systems and Geopolitics		30% contribution to A level qualification Total marks 105
Paper 3 Synoptic investigation of a contemporary geographical issue		20% contribution to A level qualification Total marks 70
Coursework Non-Examined Assessment (NEA) A level Independent Investigation	<p>Recommended word count 3000–4000 words</p>	20% contribution to A level qualification Total marks 70

Assessment objectives

AS/A level Geography

	Students must:	AS level	A level
AO1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of places, environments, concepts, processes, interactions and change, at a variety of scale.	40%	34%
AO2	Apply knowledge and understanding in different contexts to interpret, analyse and evaluate geographical information and issues	35%	40%
AO3	Use a variety of relevant quantitative, qualitative and fieldwork skills to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> investigate geographical questions and issues interpret, analyse and evaluate data and evidence construct arguments and draw conclusions 	25%	26%
Total:		100%	100%

AS level Geography: assessment objective breakdown

Paper	Assessment Objectives			Total for all Assessment Objectives
	AO1 %	AO2 %	AO3 %	
Paper 1	20	17.8	12.2	50
Paper 2	20	17.8	12.2	50
Total for GCE AS Level	40%	35.6%	24.4%	100%

A level Geography: assessment objective breakdown

Paper	Assessment Objectives			Total for all Assessment Objectives
	AO1 %	A)2 %	AO3 %	
Paper 1	13	15.75	1.25	30%
Paper 2	13	15.75	1.25	30%
Paper 3	5.5	6	8.5	20%
Coursework: Independent Investigation	2.5	2.5	15	20%
Total for A level	34%	40%	26%	100%

What AS assessment will look like

Question 5 about 'Coastal Landscapes and Change' from our AS Geography Paper 1 sample assessment materials gives examples of our short-response questions.

Each question will always begin with **accessible** items requiring lower-order thinking skills that students can answer with confidence.

Questions then **ramp in demand**, finishing with extended writing items.

5 (a) Name **one** weathering process that occurs at a coast. (1)

(b) Study Figure 5 in the Resource Booklet.

(i) State the six figure grid reference of the eastern most point of Hurst Castle Spit. (1)

(ii) Calculate the areal extent of the salt marsh shown on the map to the nearest km². (1)

A 1.0 km²

B 2.0 km²

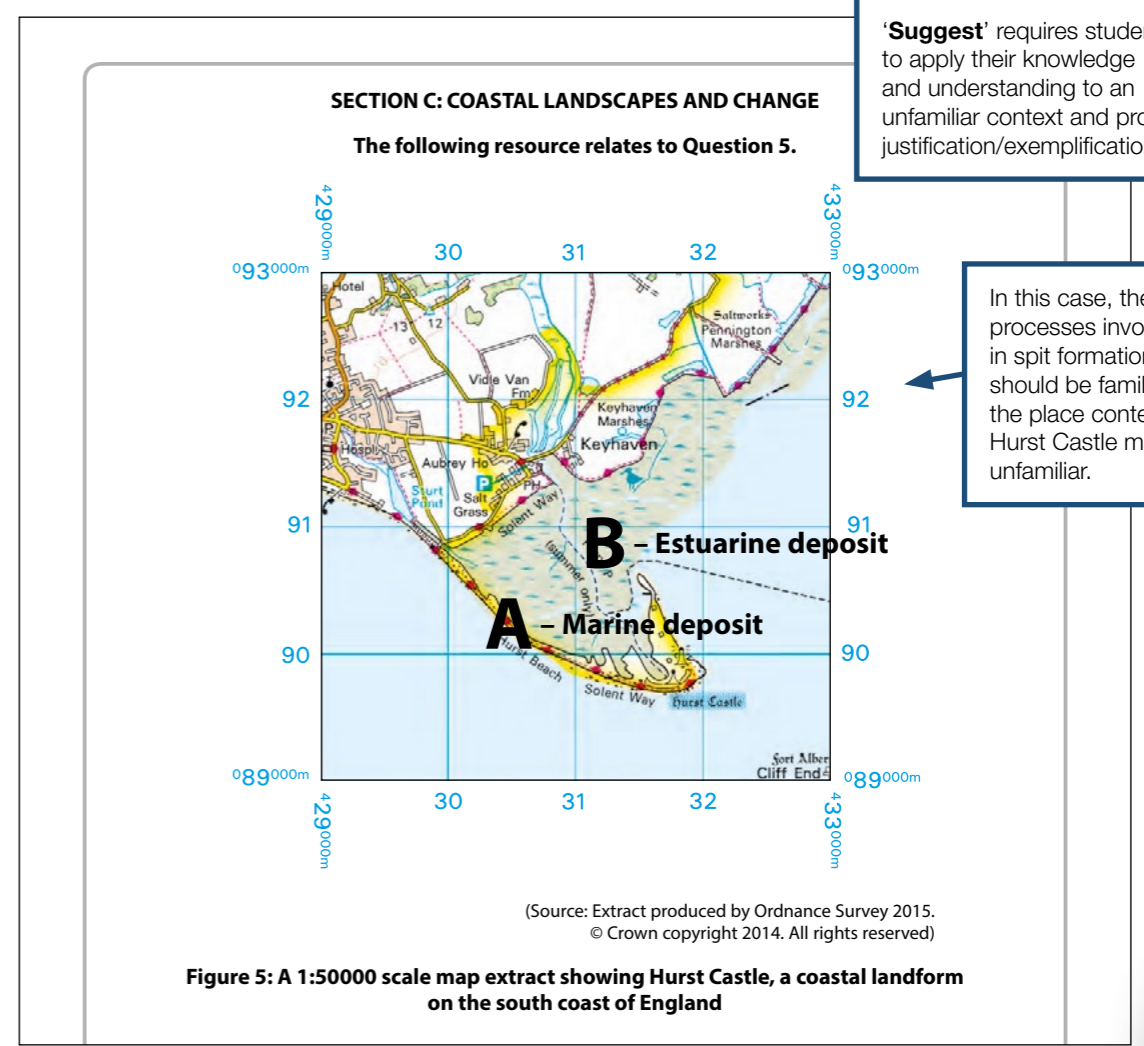
C 3.0 km²

D 4.0 km²

(iii) Suggest **one** reason for the differences in the characteristics of the sediment found at A and the sediment found at B. (3)

'Suggest' requires students to apply their knowledge and understanding to an unfamiliar context and provide a justification/exemplification.

In this case, the processes involved in spit formation should be familiar but the place context of Hurst Castle may be unfamiliar.



AS assessment

AO3 is used to assess a student's ability to use skills to investigate geographical questions and issues. In longer questions students will need to construct arguments from the analysis, interpretation and evaluation of data and evidence.

Question number	Answer	Mark
5(a)	<p>AO1 (1 mark)</p> <p>Award 1 mark for any correct physical, chemical or biological weathering process, from the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> freeze-thaw (congelifraction) solution hydrolysis root wedging. <p>Accept any other appropriate response.</p> <p>Do not accept non-weathering processes (e.g. landslides/slumping etc.).</p>	(1)
5(b)(i)	<p>AO3 (1 mark)</p> <p>Accept any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 320 897 320 898 320 899 	(1)
5(b)(ii)	<p>AO3 (1 mark)</p> <p>B - 2.0 km</p>	(1)
5(b)(iii)	<p>AO1 (2 marks)/AO2 (1 mark)</p> <p>Award 1 mark for using map evidence to identify a difference between the sediment characteristics of A and B and a further 2 marks for explaining why this is the case.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Site A is likely to be larger (1)/or more angular (1) as it is derived from mass movement (1)/or erosion (1) from the coast and then transported along the coast through longshore drift (1)/or currents (1)/or tides (1). Site B is likely to be smaller (1) as it is a fluvial deposit (1) and so transported by a river and then deposited through flocculation (1). <p>Accept any other appropriate response.</p>	(3)

Questions targeting this AO will require students to **apply** their understanding in order to use **quantitative** and **qualitative** geographical skills in an investigative context. It could also require students to use higher-order thinking skills to **reflect** on their findings.

Explore our sample assessment materials at:
www.edexcel.com/geographyassess2016

AS assessment

Question 6 about 'Coastal Landscapes and Change' from our AS Geography Paper 1 sample assessment materials gives an example of an extended-response question based on a fieldwork context familiar to students.

(c) You have also carried out field research investigating coastal landscapes and change.

Assess how the accuracy and reliability of your fieldwork results affected your conclusions.

(9)

Location of geographical investigation

AO3 indicative content will only be used in the context of fieldwork investigations.

Question number	Answer
6(c)	<p>AO3 (9 marks)</p> <p>Marking instructions</p> <p>Markers must apply the descriptors in line with the general marking guidance and the qualities outlined in the levels-based mark scheme below.</p> <p>No marks for stating research question, but this should be used as the context for the answer.</p> <p>Indicative content guidance</p> <p>Content depends on students' choice of field research and the conclusions drawn. Assessment should include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> results should be clearly outlined with some supportive quantitative data both primary data and secondary data should be identified links with conclusions should be clear conclusions should be clearly explained with appropriate links to the data gathered qualifications should be evident about the strength of the relationship between the data. <p>All conclusions are likely to be partial and tentative given the limited range of primary data gathered.</p>

While students' responses will relate to their individual investigation, the indicative content will provide **examples** of the types of things students would say about the use of skills, the interpretations/analysis/evaluation of their data, and critical reflection in their argument.

The **indicative content** isn't prescriptive and students aren't expected to include all of it. Other relevant material not suggested here will also be credited.

AS assessment

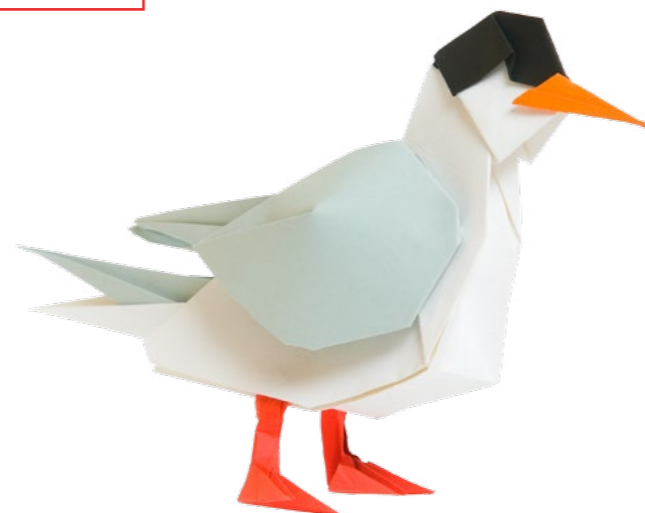
Levels-based mark schemes are used for extended-writing questions. Each level of descriptors articulates the AO skill characteristics that must be demonstrated in the response to achieve marks.

The **level descriptors** will not change during the lifetime of the qualification.

Level	Mark	Descriptor
	0	No rewardable material.
Level 1	1–3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shows evidence that fieldwork investigation skills used may not have been fully appropriate or effective for the investigation of the geographical questions/issue. (AO3) Considers the fieldwork investigation process/data/evidence, with limited relevant connections and/or judgements. (AO3) Argument about the investigation is simplistic and/or generic. (AO3)
Level 2	4–6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shows evidence that fieldwork investigation skills used were largely appropriate and effective for the investigation of the geographical questions/issue. (AO3) Critically considers the fieldwork investigation process/data/evidence in order to make some relevant connections and valid judgements. (AO3) Argument about the investigation may have unbalanced consideration of factors, but is mostly coherent. (AO3)
Level 3	7–9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shows evidence that fieldwork investigation skills used were appropriate and effective for the investigation of the geographical questions/issue. (AO3) Critically considers the fieldwork investigation process/data/evidence in order to make relevant connections and judgements that are supported by evidence. (AO3) Argument about the investigation includes balanced consideration of factors and is fully developed and coherent. (AO3)

For each type of extended-writing question, there is a **distinct set** of levels-based mark schemes:

- 6-mark Explain
- 9-mark Fieldwork Assess
- 12-mark Assess
- 16-mark Synoptic Evaluate



What A level assessment will look like

Question 2b about 'Superpowers' from our A level Geography Paper 2 sample assessment materials gives an example of an extended-writing question.

This '**Assess**' question requires students to use evidence to determine the relative significance of the superpowers' rising demand for physical resources.

Students need to give balanced consideration to both the environmental and political challenges this has created, and identify which are the most important.

2 (b) Assess to what extent the superpowers' rising demand for physical resources has led to both environmental and political challenges.

(12)

12-mark 'assess' questions will always be linked to more than one key idea, or be resource based.

Question number	Answer
2(b)	<p>AO1 (3 marks)/AO2 (9 marks)</p> <p>Marking instructions Markers must apply the descriptors in line with the general marking guidance and the qualities outlined in the levels-based mark scheme below. Responses that demonstrate only AO1 without any AO2 should be awarded marks as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level 1 AO1 performance: 1 mark • Level 2 AO1 performance: 2 marks • Level 3 AO1 performance: 3 marks. <p>Indicative content guidance The indicative content below is not prescriptive and candidates are not required to include all of it. Other relevant material not suggested below must also be credited. Relevant points may include:</p> <p>AO1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • there is a variety of political and environmental challenges, which exist both domestically and internationally, – direct political challenges to military power over key resources (especially oil), challenges to independence of political action (Russia versus Ukraine), challenges of the environmental impact of exploiting a contested resource base • physical resources include land and water as well as minerals and energy • no superpower is self-sufficient in physical resources but they vary in their dependency on imports to maintain their economies • environmental and political challenges exist both domestically and internationally <p>AO2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the governments and political elites of the superpowers need to legitimate power by maintaining economic growth or they face internal political challenges to the ruling elite/government that may lead to change • the maintenance of economic growth will inevitably lead to environmental change, much of it negative through increased consumption in itself (the growth of car ownership in China) but also the extraction of the necessary resources to manufacture those resources • there are clearly short-term environmental challenges (pollution of waterways in east and south Asia) but also potentially more serious long-term consequences through habitat destruction and the production of greenhouse gases • there is a clear relationship between environmental concerns and the health of the economy, which can have political repercussions – in times of boom then environmental concerns have a high public profile but in times of economic recession/depression the environment is rarely central to the political debate • superpowers have been active in searching out global resources using TNCs as an instrument of extending their control (US oil companies in Ecuador, Alcoa in Jamaica, Africa's new imperialist era) but this is politically sensitive as agreements are sought with foreign

AO1 is used to assess students' knowledge and understanding. At A level there is a distinction made between 'understanding' and 'knowledge in isolation' (also referred to as 'recall') and A level assessments will not include any assessment solely of recall.

AO2 assesses a student's ability to apply their understanding to unfamiliar situations and/or make their own links between aspects of subject content.
Application must lead to analysis, interpretation and/or evaluation.

A level assessment

Question number	Answer
	<p>governments who may lack the support of many of their own people (e.g. Nigeria)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> superpowers use both soft and hard power to establish control of resources (US in Iraq, China in Angola) and this results in political challenges and tensions between superpowers the agencies of controlling the supply of physical resources are largely TNCs, who have complex relationships with the governments and people of both the superpowers and resource rich countries exploitation of physical resources on the domestic territory of superpowers will also impact negatively on the environment and thus political legitimacy domestically especially in areas affected – fracking, oil shale exploitation and deep-water oil drilling are obvious examples there are significant political challenges to the growth model that dominates in all superpowers (rise of green politics) with the challenges, especially the environmental impacts perceived as being both inevitable but also ultimately overwhelming

Level	Mark	Descriptor
	0	No rewardable material.
Level 1	1–4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates isolated elements of geographical knowledge and understanding, some of which may be inaccurate or irrelevant. (AO1) Applies knowledge and understanding of geographical information/ideas, making limited logical connections/relationships. (AO2) Applies knowledge and understanding of geographical information/ideas to produce an interpretation with limited relevance and/or support. (AO2) Applies knowledge and understanding of geographical information/ideas to make unsupported or generic judgements about the significance of few factors, leading to an argument is unbalanced or lacks coherence. (AO2)
Level 2	5–8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates geographical knowledge and understanding, which is mostly relevant and may include some inaccuracies. (AO1) Applies knowledge and understanding of geographical information/ideas logically, making some relevant connections/relationships. (AO2) Applies knowledge and understanding of geographical information/ideas to produce a partial but coherent interpretation that is mostly relevant and supported by evidence. (AO2) Applies knowledge and understanding of geographical information/ideas to make judgements about the significance of some factors, to produce an argument that may be unbalanced or partially coherent. (AO2)
Level 3	9–12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates accurate and relevant geographical knowledge and understanding throughout. (AO1) Applies knowledge and understanding of geographical information/ideas logically, making relevant connections/relationships. (AO2) Applies knowledge and understanding of geographical information/ideas to produce a full and coherent interpretation that is relevant and supported by evidence. (AO2) Applies knowledge and understanding of geographical information/ideas to make supported judgements about the significance of factors throughout the response, leading to a balanced and coherent argument. (AO2)

For each type of extended writing question, there is a **distinct set** of level-based mark schemes:

- 6-mark Explain
- 6-mark Resource-based Explain/Suggest
- 8-mark Explain
- 8-mark Analyse
- 12-mark Assess
- 20-mark Evaluate
- 18-mark Synoptic Paper Evaluate
- 24-mark Synoptic Paper Evaluate

Command words are used consistently across GCSE and AS/A level mark tariffs

GCSE						
Marks	1	2	3	4	8	12
Identify/State/Name	●					
Define	●					
Calculate	●	●				
Label	●	●				
Draw		●	●			
Compare			●			
Describe		●	●			
Explain		●	●	●		
Suggest		●	●	●		
Examine					A	
Assess					●	
Evaluate					●	
Discuss						A
Justify						B

Key:

- tariffs that apply to **both GCSE specs**
- A** tariffs are only found in **specification A**
- B** tariffs are only found in **specification B**
- tariffs that apply to **both AS and A level specifications**.
- AS** tariffs are only found in the **AS specification**
- AL** tariffs are only found in the **A level specification**

The command word mark tariffs outside the grey box are point marked.

The command word mark tariffs inside the grey box are levels based.

Levels-based mark schemes (LBMS) are specific to each particular command word so that students know exactly what traits are expected and can master their approach to these extended writing questions. At GCSE and AS, there are only 3-4 question types like these, whereas at A level a student's extended writing is significantly more important.

A level													
Marks	1	2	3	4	6	8	9	12	16	18	20	24	
Define	AS												
Identify/State/Name	AS	AS											
Complete	AS	AS											
Describe		AS	AS										
Compare		AS	AS										
Calculate	AS	AS		AL									
Draw/Plot		AS	AS	AL									
Suggest		AS	○		AL								
Explain			AL	○	○	AL							
Analyse						AL							
Assess							AS	○					
Evaluate									AS	AL	AL	AL	

Definitions of Command Words can be found in each relevant specification, see page references:

- Edexcel GCSE (9-1) Geography A – page 43
- Edexcel GCSE (9-1) Geography B – page 49
- Edexcel AS level Geography – page 57
- Edexcel A level Geography – page 95.

All our specifications are on our website at:
www.edexcel.com/geographyassess2016

Question styles

We use a mixture of question types, demand levels and response structures throughout our exam papers, including:

- multiple-choice questions*
- short open response
- open response
- calculation
- extended open response.

*Note that A level exam papers do not assess knowledge recall in isolation, so there will be no multiple-choice questions or use of command words such as 'define' and 'describe'.

Use of language

Clear questions and accessible language are used throughout the exams, so each student can understand what they need to answer. This not only includes the command words, but also the resources provided in the paper.

Writing guidance

- Concise resource booklets and bullet pointed prose to support student comprehension under exam conditions.
- Specialist vocabulary drawn directly from the specification.
- Clear, accessible figures, e.g. simplified maps, providing the information most pertinent to a question.
- A range of presentation styles so that all learners can access the information.



Teaching approaches for all abilities

Developing examination skills and mastering the command words

If you missed our workshop on the new Edexcel GCSE (9-1) Geography A and B specifications, at the Geographical Association conference, download the slides which look at the different Teaching and Learning strategies that can be used to develop exam skills and master the command words at: www.edexcel.com/GCSEgeogslides

Teaching and learning strategies

Map from Memory

1. The teacher has an information sheet on an empty desk. Students given a blank version (can be differentiated depending on each group's ability).
2. Students numbered 1 to 4. (Depends on group size but a maximum of 4 is advised.)
3. The teacher calls up students (number 1 first, etc) to memorise the information on the sheet for 30 seconds. They return to their group and try to recreate the information on their blank sheet. Here's the catch, student number 1 can only verbally communicate the information while the rest of the group adds it to the blank sheet.
4. After two minutes of writing, call up student number 2 and the process is repeated until all students have seen the information.

Half-time strategy

5. The second half begins and process is repeated.
6. The whole exercise should last no longer than 30 minutes. Afterwards, a short text or miniature blank version of the map or graph issued to test individual learning and progression.

Half-time strategy to stretch students further

Q. What strategies did you use to interpret and remember the information?
Q. Which strategies worked best for you?

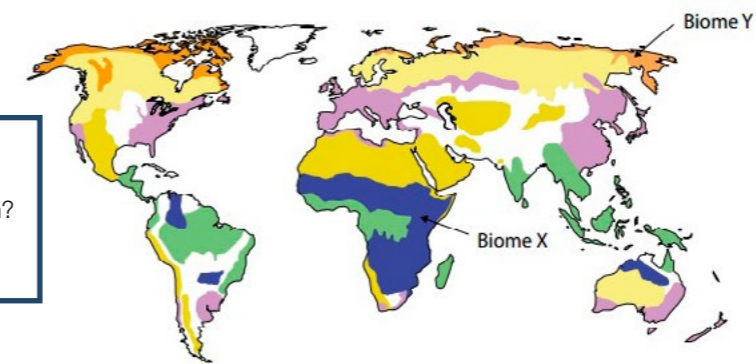


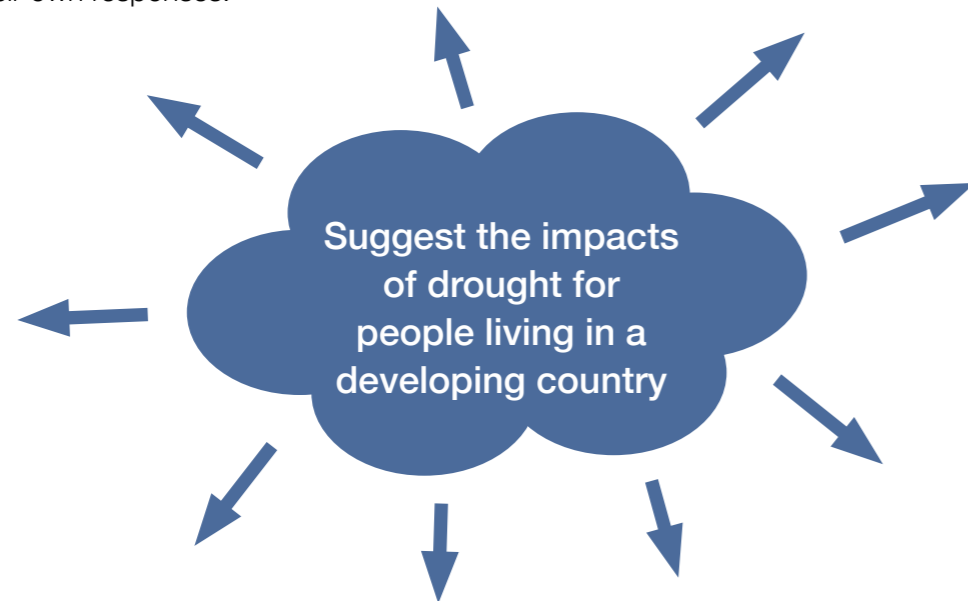
Figure 1
A map of biomes

Q. What have you learned from this exercise that would help you improve your approach to revising for the exams?

Teacher presents students with a related practice exam question:
Q. Does this change the way that you interpret this figure?
Q. Which is the most important information to focus on now?

e.g. Silent debate

Engage students in silent debate to improve their ability to engage with different perspectives and reflect on what their peers are saying. This helps to improve the balance and range of ideas in their own responses.



Students are grouped, and each student has a different colour pen to write their suggestions on an A3 piece of paper... **SILENTLY**. They can read each others' suggestions and respond or develop, and the teacher can check that all students are engaging with each other in the debate.

e.g. Improving literacy

To avoid the problem of students merely writing everything they know in the form of a description they need to practise explanatory sentences, supporting their statements with evidence and linking their points back to the question.

PEEL sentence starters are a useful way to focus students and improve their literacy:

Point	Evidence	Explanation	Link
It has been suggested that...	The evidence clearly shows...	The source clearly indicates...	With this in mind, it is evident that...
It is believed that...	This is supported by...	This shows us that...	Therefore, it is evident that...
Some people argue that...	This is demonstrated by...	It is clear from this that...	All this evidence demonstrates...
Many people believe that...	The source tells us that...	This evidence explains that...	
One argument is that...		This supports the argument by...	
One school of thought is that...		It appears that...	
		This demonstrates that...	

e.g. Extended writing in Edexcel GCSE (9-1) Geography A and B

A look at the final sections in Paper 3 of both specifications, particularly the 12-mark questions at the end.

GCSE A – the UK Challenges section and GCSE B – the decision-making exercise (DME)

→ Identify a challenge or a need; explain why it exists...	→ Identify different solutions or options...	→ Weigh up the advantages and disadvantages of each...	→ Come to a view: how significant is the issue, what should happen next?
---	---	---	---

The questions will follow a process similar to that above, the questions are not separate, but **linked** into a **sequence**. The most demanding question will always be the final one.

Helping students make sense

Asking simple questions about a country's context:

	Developed	Emerging	Developing
Income/wealth	Rich: per person incomes of over \$20,000 per year	Middling: probably lots of inequality ie rich people but also many poor	Poverty; many people surviving on a few dollars a day
Population?	Stable: ageing, possibly even declining	Growing but slowing down	Expanding; youthful; more mouths to feed each year
Economic sectors?	Services/tertiary	Manufacturing/secondary	Farming/primary
Government?	Strong: provides for people's needs (health, education etc)	Might do some things well eg infrastructure but less good on crime, social services etc	Poor - possible issues like corruption; dependent on aid; few services for people

Answering the 12 mark (+ 4 SPAG) extended writing question

Although specific to the DME in the Edexcel GCSE (9-1) Geography B specification this is a good approach to all geographical extended writing.

<p>RANGE</p> <p>Refer to at least 2 advantages and 2 disadvantages (costs/benefits, good/bad, positive/negative impacts) of your chosen option.</p>	<p>DETAILED EVIDENCE</p> <p>Make extended explanations using detail from the booklet, rather than vague assertions.</p>	<p>DETAILED EVIDENCE</p> <p>Refer to both people and/or environment in terms of advantages/disadvantages.</p>
<p>SYNOPTIC</p> <p>Bring in some knowledge and understanding from Topics 7 and 9.</p>	<p>COUNTER-ARGUMENT</p> <p>Explain why you have rejected one or more options, but also consider one of its strengths.</p>	<p>COME TO A VIEW</p> <p>Make an overall judgement that is logically linked to the evidence you have used.</p>

Making effective use of the specification

Geographical skills are integrated within the content for every specification. This detailed approach to our specifications helps to provide practical opportunities to learn the skills relevant to each topic and practice using them consistently throughout their course of study. This is the most effective way to build student confidence and proficiency across the entire range of skills required for the exams.

Prescribed fieldwork environments, quantitative/qualitative tasks and secondary sources of data, ensure that students are assessed on the fieldwork environments they have experienced. It also makes it more manageable to plan for field-trips and assessments. Furthermore, at GCSE students will only be assessed on fieldwork in one paper, supporting focused and successful exam preparation. In addition, the A level specification provides detailed guidance on how to conduct the Independent Investigation.

Synoptic themes

At AS and A level, our synoptic themes (Players, Attitudes & Actions, and Futures & Uncertainties) are designed to support you in teaching students a holistic understanding of geography. Students are required to answer synoptic questions at AS (16-mark extended writing Qs) and at A-level (Paper 3) so it is important that they are reminded throughout their course of study about these over-arching themes.

Tracking and assessing progress

Tools to help you measure progress

A wide range of free support and materials are available to help you track and assess your students' progress over time.

Free support

- ✓ **Getting started guides**
- ✓ **Additional specimen papers** to help you become familiar with the style of exams and to give students practice papers you can use to pinpoint and guide their progress.
- ✓ **Student exemplars and examiner commentaries** available for first teaching to help you and your students understand the standard that's expected.
- ✓ **Training** on how to use our mark schemes and mark our specimen papers. Past training event materials online.
- ✓ **Free coursework exemplars, marking training and trial marking material** for the new A level Independent Investigation.
- ✓ The **Coursework Advisory Service** is a voluntary service that offers advice, based on the information you provide, as to the appropriateness of the topic and/or title of your students' A level Independent Investigations.
www.edexcel.com/CASgeography
- ✓ **examWizard** examWizard is a free exam preparation tool containing a bank of past Edexcel GCSE Geography exam questions, mark schemes and examiners' reports.
www.examwizard.co.uk
- ✓ **ResultsPlus** provides the most detailed analysis available of your students' exam performance. Widely used by teachers across the country, this free online service enables you to identify topics and skills where students could benefit from further learning, helping them gain a deeper understanding of geography.
www.edexcel.com/resultsplus

Pearson Progression Services

To help you track your students' progress from Year 7 to Year 11, Pearson have created a 12-step Progression Scale and an editable Progression Map that breaks down content and skills into progress descriptors and maps them to the Scale.

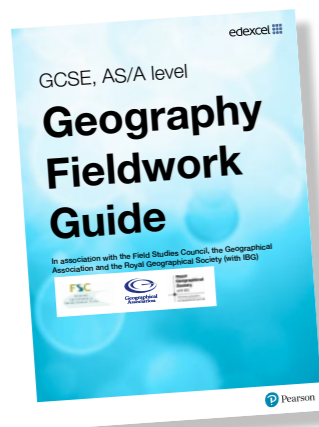
We have consulted subject and grading experts to help us map our Steps in the Scale to indicative grades for GCSE (9-1), helping you to formulate grade predictions, apply interventions and track progress.

Find out more at: www.pearsonschools.co.uk/geographyprogression2016



Support every step of the way

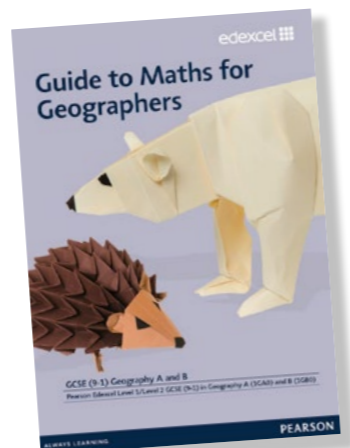
GCSE, AS/A level Geography Fieldwork Guide



A top-level guide to planning high-quality fieldwork around your teaching, developed with the Field Studies Council, the Royal Geographical Society and the Geography Association to ensure that field trips are meaningful and successfully prepare student for the exams.

Guide to Maths for Geographers

Maths for Geographers guides for GCSE and AS/A level clearly detailing what is learnt in KS3 and GCSE Maths lessons and linking this to their geographical skills. The guides help teachers use terminology and approaches that are consistent with Maths so students can make links between the subjects. Accompanying skills worksheets will help build confidence and fluency as well as setting out how these skills will be assessed in the examinations.



Geographical Literacy Guide (forthcoming)

Based on the proven approach of our **Grammar for Writing** pedagogy, we are working with Exeter University, who will analyse completed sample assessment materials by students and provide guidance on common literacy issues at all ability levels. Student exemplars with both examiner commentaries and literacy guidance will be made available in the Guides.

Schemes of Work for every topic

Topic Booklets for every topic

Get in touch

To find out more about our assessments, sign up to our Getting Ready to Teach events.

www.edexcel.com/geographyteach2016

Our Geography Subject Advisor, Jon Wolton is on hand to help with any questions.

Call us on: **020 7010 2185**

Email us: TeachingGeography@pearson.com



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