

Edexcel International GCSE 2012 in Geography (4GE0) and Edexcel Level 1/Level 2 Certificate in Geography (KGE0)

Glossary of key terminology

All terms stated in the specification can be used in the examination. Students should be familiar with, and gain some understanding of, these terms in relation to the five topics that they study. A sample of the required terms is listed below under each of the topic headings. None of the lists is comprehensive; each list includes only terms stated in the specification. Students are encouraged to use other technical terms beyond those listed here in their answers.

Some terms appear in more than one topic, for example 'mass movement' in both *Topic 1 – River environments* and *Topic 2 – Coastal environments*. In most cases these terms are only listed once.

Country classification:

This specification uses the following classification of countries:

LIC	Low Income Country	This is based on the World Bank income classifications (GNI per capita), which in 2010 were Low Income \$1005 or below, Middle Income \$1006 – 12275 and High Income \$12276 or above.
MIC	Middle Income Country	
HIC	High Income Country	

Topic 1 — River environments

Abstraction	Removal of water from rivers, lakes or groundwater for human use.
Base flow	That part of a river's discharge fed by groundwater.
Channel	The part of a valley floor occupied by the flowing water of a stream or river.
Channel network	The system of tributary streams that join increasingly larger river channels in a drainage basin.
Dam (& reservoir)	A barrier (made on earth, concrete or stone) built across a valley to interrupt river flow and create a man-made lake (reservoir) to store water.
Discharge	The quantity of water that passes a given point on a stream or river-bank within a given period of time.
Drainage basin	The area drained by a river and its tributaries, bounded by a watershed.
Erosion	The wearing down of the land by water, ice, wind and gravity.
Flood	When river discharge exceeds river channel capacity and water spills out of the channel onto the floodplain and other areas.
Flood plain	That part of a valley floor over which a river spreads during seasonal floods.
Hydrograph	A graph on which variations in a river's discharge are plotted against time.
Hydrological cycle	The unending movement of water between land, sea and atmosphere.

Impermeable	Rocks that do not allow water to pass through them.
Interlocking spurs	A series of ridges projecting out on alternate sides of a valley and around which a river winds its course.
Landform	A physical feature with recognizable characteristics e.g. waterfall, meander, formed by specific processes such as erosion or deposition.
Levee	A bank of sediment formed along the edge of a river channel deposited by floodwater.
Mass-movement	The movement of weathered rock down slope without the direct action of running water.
Meander	A pronounced bend in a river.
Oxbow lake	A crescent shaped lake which form when a meander bend is cut off from the main river channel.
Precipitation	The deposition of moisture on the Earth's surface, in the form of dew, frost, rain, hail, sleet or snow.
River regime	The variation (seasonal pattern) in river discharge over the course of a year.
Shortage / surplus	Areas where water supply is lower / higher than water demand from humans
Store	Places within a system where materials or energy are held for a time.
Streamflow	The flow of surface water in a well-defined channel.
Transfer	Flows of water between stores in the hydrological cycle.
Valley	A linear depression in the landscape formed by erosion, usually with a river channel at its lowest point.
Velocity (stream)	The speed of water flow in the river channel.
Water quality	A measure of how fit for human consumption water is. Polluted water has low water quality.
Watershed	The dividing line between one drainage basin and another.
Waterfall	A river landform created by erosion, where water drops steeply/vertically as it flows over a cliff like feature.
Weathering	The chemical alteration and physical breakdown of rock in situ.



Topic 2 — Coastal environments

Arch	An arch-shaped void in a headland, open at both sides, formed by erosion.
Bar	A linear depositional beach –like landform, formed when a spit joins two headlands.
Biodiversity	The variety of species in an ecosystem.
Cave	A void in a cliff where rock material has been removed by erosion.
Coral reef	A marine ecosystem formed by reef -building corals
Deposition	When sediment (sand, gravel, silt) which has been in transport, stops moving and is dumped.
Ecosystem	An organic community of plants and animals interacting with their environment.
Hard engineering	The use of concrete and large artificial structures by civil engineers to defend land against natural erosion processes.
Headland (& bay)	A rocky coastal promontory of more erosion resistant rock; headlands lie between bays of less resistant rock.
Longshore drift	The movement of loose materials along a coastline by wave action because they break at an oblique angle to the shore.
Mangroves	Tropical and sub-tropical coastal forests; mangrove trees can grow in salty, tidal water.
Salt marsh	A tidal ecosystem in estuaries and deltas consisting of mud flats with salt tolerant grasses and flowers.
Sand dunes	Coastal sand hills above the high tide mark covered with grasses and shrubs.
Sea level change	The rise or fall in the average level of the sea over long periods of time. This acts as a base level for natural erosion.
Soft engineering	Managing erosion by working with natural processes to help restore beaches and coastal ecosystems.
Spit	A depositional landform formed when a finger of sediment extends from the shore out to sea, often at a river mouth. They often have curved ends.
Stack (& stump)	An isolated pillar of rock left when the top of an arch has collapsed; over time further erosion reduces the stack to a smaller, lower stump.
Sub-aerial processes	The general re-shaping of the land by normal atmospheric processes, for example wind and rain. It includes weathering, mass movement, erosion and deposition.
Wave action	Erosion, transport and deposition caused by waves on the coast.
Wave-cut platform	A rocky, level area at or around sea level representing the base of old and now retreated cliffs.

Topic 3 — Hazardous environments

Aid	Help given by more wealthy nations (HICs) to less well-off nations (LICs), mainly to encourage development.
Adjustment	People altering their behavior to prepare for natural hazards, and reduce their impact.
Climatic hazard	Hazards caused by weather in the atmosphere (drought, flood, storm)
Disaster (natural)	The results of a natural hazard taking place, such as deaths, injuries and destruction of property.
Disaster relief	Immediate help given after a disaster, including the emergency response such as firefighters and search and rescue teams.
Earthquake	A sudden or violent movement within the Earth's crust followed by a series of shocks.
Evacuation	Moving people from dangerous locations when a natural hazard, such as a hurricane, has been predicted.
Hazard	A natural event (for example earthquake, flood, landslide, volcanic eruption) that threatens or causes damage, destruction and death.
Mitigation	Reducing the risk from natural hazards before they happen, such as building earthquake proof buildings.
Monitoring	Recording physical changes, such as earthquake tremors around a volcano or tracking a hurricane by satellite, to help predict when and where a natural hazard might strike.
Prediction	Being able to say when and where a natural hazard will strike. This can be done, to some extent for volcanic eruptions and hurricanes, but not for earthquakes.
Preparation	Actions taken before a hazard strikes to reduce its impact, such as educating people or improving building design.
Risk assessment	Judging the amount of damage an area might expect from any given hazard.
Tectonic hazard	A natural hazard caused by plate tectonics (volcanoes, earthquakes and tsunami, as well as some landslides)
Tectonic plate	A rigid segment of the Earth's crust which can 'float' across the heavier, semi-molten rock below. Continental plates are less dense, but thicker than oceanic plates. Movement occurs.
Tropical storm (or cyclone)	An area of low pressure with winds moving in a spiral around the calm central point called the eye of the storm. Winds are powerful and rain heavy.
Volcano	An opening in the Earth's crust out of which lava, ash and gases erupt.



Topic 4 — Economic activity and energy

Accessibility	The ease with which people can get to a particular place.
Development	The way a country progresses and improves over time, usually measured by rising incomes and better quality of life.
Economic sector (s)	A major division of an economy. Most commonly four sectors are recognised: primary (agriculture, fishing, mining), secondary (manufacturing), tertiary (services) and quaternary (R&D, information processing).
Energy (resources)	The means of providing motive force, heat or light. They include electricity, gas, steam and nuclear power, together with fuels such as coal, oil and wood.
Energy efficiency	Using energy, such as electricity, more carefully and less wastefully to reduce overall use (and reduce pollution)
Energy gap	The difference between the demand for energy, and the supply of it. The gap is made worse by the phasing out of fossil fuel use.
Finite (energy resource)	Energy resources which have a fixed stock, and will eventually run out, such as coal, oil and gas.
Fossil fuel	Combustible materials made from the fossilised remains of plants and animals, for example peat, coal, oil and natural gas.
High-tech industry	Manufacturing involving advanced technology, such as the making of microchips and computers. It also includes genetic engineering, communications and information technology.
informal sector / employment	This is largely made up of jobs over which there is little or no official control. It includes jobs such as child minding, domestic cleaning and bar tending.
Location (of economic activity)	The site / place a shop, factory or office is found at. Businesses think carefully about where to locate, taking into account many factors.
Non-renewable resource	A material that cannot be restored after use. Examples include fossil fuels and minerals.
Raw material	Anything that occurs in a natural state and that is useful to people.
Renewable resource	A resource which is not diminished when it is used; it recurs and cannot be exhausted (for example wind and tidal energy).
Sectoral shift	The gradual change from an economy based on primary sectors, to one based on secondary (manufacturing) to an n economy based on tertiary and quaternary industry.
Transnational company (TNC)	A huge enterprise which operates on a global scale and is involved in a wide variety of businesses.
Transport	Moving people, raw materials or goods from one location to another.

Topic 5 — Ecosystems and rural environments

Arable farming	A type of agriculture where the emphasis is on growing crops.
Adaptation	The way plants and animals have evolved to cope with the conditions they live in, such as grasses being able to survive fire by growing from their base.
Biome	A world-scale ecosystem usually defined by the dominant vegetation, for example the tropical rain forest.
Cash crop	Crops grown for profit (not for the farmer to eat) such as coffee, tea and cocoa. In LICs these crops are often exported to HICs.
Conservation	The protection of such things as wild animals and plants, their habits, fine scenery, historic buildings, etc. This is because of a growing awareness of their amenity and value, and often because they are scarce or threatened.
Counter-urbanisation	The movement of people and activities away from large cities to small towns, villages or the countryside.
Depopulation (rural)	People leaving the countryside, often to go to urban areas, so rural population goes down.
Ecosystem	An organic community of plants and animals interacting with their environment.
Extensive farming	Farming large areas of land, with low inputs (labour, fertilizers) and low yields.
Food web	In an ecosystem, a food web shows what is eating what, and therefore how energy moves from plants to animals.
Genetically modified (GM) food	Food coming from crops and livestock that have been genetically engineered to improve productivity and disease-resistance. The scientific techniques include either transferring genes from one organism to another, or changing genetic materials within an organism.
Grassland (temperate)	A biome which is found in the mid-latitude interiors of continents dominated by grasses and rich soils. They are known as prairies (North America), steppes (Asia) and pampas (South America)
HYVs	High Yielding Varieties of cereal crops such as rice and wheat which have been developed since the 1960s and can more than double yields.
Intensive farming	Farming with high inputs (fertilizers, labour, and fossil fuels) often in a small area, producing high yields.
Irrigation	The supply of water to the land by means of channels, streams and sprinklers in order to permit the growth of crops in dry areas.
Pastoral farming	A type of agriculture concerned mainly with the rearing of livestock, for meat, milk, wool or hides.
Rural	The countryside, or non urbanized areas. May rural areas have small settlements, low population density and open space used for farming.
Rural urban migration	People moving from the countryside to live in towns and cities.
Structure (population)	The balance of young, middle aged and old people in an area. A population pyramid shows the age and gender structure of an area's population.
Subsistence	Farming to produce food to eat, and selling any extra that might be produced.
Succession	The way areas are colonized by plants which gradually change until a final ecosystem such as temperate grassland or tropical forest develops.

Topic 6 — Urban environments

Brownfield site	Land that has been used, abandoned and now awaits some new use. Commonly found in urban areas, particularly in the inner city.
Business park	A purpose built area of offices and warehouses, often at the edge of a city and on a main road.
Congestion	When there is too great a volume of traffic for roads to cope with, so traffic jams form and traffic slows to a crawl.
Deprivation	When people lack what the rest of society considers 'normal' such as good housing, reasonable incomes or access to healthcare.
Ethnic group	A group of people sharing the same characteristics of race, nationality, language or religion.
Greenfield site	A plot of land, often in a rural or on the edge of an urban area that has not yet been subject to any building development.
Inner city	That part of the built-up area and close to the CBD, often characterised by old housing, poor services and brownfield sites.
Landuse	What types of buildings / economic activities exist in an area such as residential, retail or industrial.
Land value	The market value of a piece of land; what businesses or individuals are prepared to pay for it (or rent it).
Mega-city	A city with a population exceeding 10 million.
Planner	A decision-maker whose job it is to decide how to use land e.g. where to build roads, or houses. Planners often decide to conserve areas such as Greenfield sites by not allowing development.
Rebranding	Regeneration that also tries to give an area a new image. Rebranded areas often have names and logos e.g. MediaCityUK in Salford.
Retail complex	A purpose built area for shopping (and often leisure), such as an out of town shopping centre or retail park.
Self-help (housing)	When people in shanty towns / squatter settlements gradually improve their own housing and surroundings. Often they are helped by an NGO.
Shanty town	An area of makeshift and unsanitary housing, often occupied by squatters (no legal right to occupy).
Socio-economic group	A group of people distinguished by employment, income and social characteristics such as education and family status.
Social deprivation	The degree to which an individual or an area is deprived of services, decent housing, adequate income and local employment.
Suburbanisation	The spread of low density, often detached or semi-detached, housing around the edges of a city or town.
Urbanization	The process of becoming more urban, mainly through more and more people living in towns and cities.
Urban regeneration	The revival of old parts of the built-up area by either installing modern facilities in old buildings (known as renewal) or opting for redevelopment (ie demolishing all existing buildings and starting afresh).

Topic 7 — Fragile environments

Adaptation (global warming)	Changing lifestyles and economic activity to suit a different climate, such as farming different crops or installing air conditioning.
Agro-forestry	Combining agriculture and forestry, as in the planting of windbreaks in areas suffering from wind erosion or growing trees for fuel.
Deforestation	The felling and clearance of forested land by humans.
Desertification	The spread of desert-like conditions into semi-arid areas.
Drought	A long, continuous period of dry weather (below average rainfall)
Famine	A widespread, serious, shortage of food. In the worst cases it can lead to starvation and even death.
Global warming	A slow but significant rise in the Earth's temperature. It may be caused by the build up of excessive amounts of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere which increase the greenhouse effect.
Greenhouse effect (enhanced)	The warming of the Earth's atmosphere because pollution is preventing heat from escaping into space.
Malnutrition	When people lack a balanced, sufficient diet. Often malnourished people never get quite enough food and / or lack key nutrients.
Migration	When people move from one area to another. The United Nations defines migration as moving for more than 1 year.
Orbital changes	Changes in the way the earth's orbits the sun, on very long timescales, which can change the earth's climate.
Overgrazing	Putting too many animals on grazing land so that the vegetation cover is gradually destroyed.
Population pressure	When there are too many people for the resources (water, farmland) of an area to support.
Solar output	Changes in the energy emitted by the sun (seen as changing sunspots of the sun's surface) which can alter earth's climate.
Soil erosion	The removal of soil by wind and water and by the movement of soil down slope.
Sustainability	Actions that minimize the negative impacts on the environment e.g. pollution and promote human wellbeing.



Topic 8 — Globalisation and migration

Asylum seeker	A forced migrant (refugee) who has asked for permission to permanently remain in the country they have migrated too.
Ecotourism	A form of tourism which aims to conserve fragile ecosystems and ensure that its benefits (jobs, income) are retained within the local area.
Forced migration	A movement of people caused by a push factor such as religious persecution or famine.
Foreign investment	Undertaken by companies to extend their business interests overseas. It might involve creating a new source of raw materials (for example a mine), setting up a branch factory, opening new retail outlets or buying shares in a foreign company.
Globalisation	The process which has created a more connected world, with increases in the movements of goods (trade) and people (migration & tourism) worldwide.
Global shift	The movement of manufacturing industry and services from high cost locations (HICs) to lower costs locations, especially MICs in Asia.
Information technologies	Computer, internet, mobile phone and satellite technologies – especially those that speed up communication and the flow of information.
Interdependence	The drawing together of the countries of the world by the processes of globalisation.
Net migration	The balance between the number of immigrants (people entering) and emigrants (people leaving) a country.
Package holiday / mass tourism	A holiday where travel and accommodation are put together by a tour operator; these are often relatively cheap holidays to popular places.
Pull factor	Something that attracts a migrant to a new location (for example freedom, a better job).
Production/commodity chains	The stages by which businesses obtain and process commodities (iron ore, oil, cotton) and transform them into manufactured good, which are then sold to consumers. Today, the whole chain often involves a number of companies and countries with materials traveling around the world.
Push factor	Something in the home area that forces or persuades a migrant to move away (for example persecution, poverty).
Refugee	A person who flees their country to avoid war, the threat of death, oppression or persecution.
TNC	Trans-National Corporation: a company that has operations (factories, offices, R&D, shops) in more than one country. Many TNCs are large and have well-known brands.
Trade	The buying and selling of goods and services between countries.
Voluntary migration	This involves people who have chosen (not been forced) to move. Perhaps they have been persuaded to migrate by pull factors such as better housing or a higher paid job.

Topic 9 — Development and human welfare

Affluence	The general level of prosperity enjoyed by a population.
Appropriate aid	Know-how and equipment that are suited to the basic conditions prevailing in the receiving country.
Birth rate	The number of births in a year per 1000 of the total population.
BRIC	The 4 countries of Brazil, Russia, India and China. All are emerging economies.
Core – Periphery	The most economically / politically dominant area in a country or region is referred to as the 'core'. Periphery areas are more isolated, have fewer businesses and well paid jobs and are less politically influential.
Death rate	The number of deaths in a year per 1000 of the total population.
Debt relief	When HICs, and banks in HICs, write-off some LIC country debt so the LIC has to pay less back.
Development	The progress of a country in terms of economic growth, the use of technology and human welfare.
Development gap	The difference in standards of living and wellbeing between the world's richest and poorest countries (between HICs and LICs).
Disparity	Any difference between one group of people, or region, and another.
Emerging economy	Countries which are developing and industrializing rapidly. They are MICs which are seeing their per capita GNI grow rapidly. Examples include Brazil, India, China, Mexico and Malaysia.
Fair trade	When producers in LICs are given a better price for the goods they produce. Often this is for farm products like cocoa, coffee or cotton. The better price improves income and reduces exploitation.
Free trade	When trade between countries is not restricted by, for example, import duties or not being a member of a group of trading nations.
Gross domestic product (GDP)	The total value of goods and services produced by a country during a year. When expressed as per head of population (per capita), it provides a widely used measure of national prosperity and development.
Gross National Income (GNI)	GNI is very similar to GDP, but GNI takes into account that some countries are in debt and pay money in debt interest. This reduces GNI relative to GDP.
Human development index (HDI)	Used as a measure of development in a country and for making international comparisons.
Human welfare	The general condition of a population in terms of diet, housing, healthcare, education, etc.
Infant mortality rate	The average number of deaths of infants under 1 year of age, per 1000 live births, per year.
Intermediate technology	The simple, easily learned and maintained technology used in a range of economic activities serving local needs in LICs.
Life expectancy	The average number of years a person might be expected to live.
Literacy	The ability to read and write. In HICs literacy rates are often around 99% of the adult population, but in LICs they are much lower
NIC	Newly Industrialized Country. These are countries which have developed rapidly



	over the last 20-30 years are moved from being LICs to MICs. The term is very similar to 'emerging economy'.
North-South divide	A way of dividing the world up into the richer 'North' (HICs) and poorer 'South' (LICs and MICs); it can be thought of as the worlds' 'haves' and 'have nots'.
Political freedom	Whether people in a country have the right to vote in fair elections and speak freely. It is often seen as an important part of development.
Poverty	When people lack the income needed to have a reasonable quality of life.
Quality of life	Difficult to define, but it is often thought of as an umbrella term that takes into account GDP and human welfare.