

# Getting to know the specifications



There are only minor differences in the content for the WJEC GCSE Geography specification (Wales) and the WJEC Eduqas GCSE (9–1) Geography A

specification (England). In both it is organised into three units/components. The content of each unit/component is summarised below:

Unit/Component 1: Changing Physical and Human Landscapes		
Core Themes	1. Landscapes and Physical Processes	Students must study <b>both</b> core themes
	2. Rural–Urban Links	
Options	3. Tectonic Landscapes and Hazards	Students must study <b>one</b> of these option themes which add breadth of knowledge to the core
	4. Coastal Hazards and their Management	
Unit/Component 2: Environmental and Development Issues		
Core Themes	5. Weather, Climate and Ecosystems	Students must study <b>both</b> core themes
	6. Development and Resource Issues	
Options	7. Social Development Issues	Students must study <b>one</b> of these option themes which add breadth of knowledge to the core
	8. Environmental Challenges	
Unit/Component 3: Fieldwork Enquiry/Applied Fieldwork Enquiry		
<p>Students are expected to undertake two fieldwork enquiries, each in a contrasting environment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● In one environment the focus will be on methodology.</li> <li>● In the second fieldwork experience, the focus will be on geography’s conceptual framework, for example commuter flows to and from a local urban area.</li> </ul>		

## Summary of assessment: WJEC GCSE Geography (Wales)

There are two written examinations at the end of your studies and you will complete a fieldwork report. The structure of the assessment is summarised below:

<b>Unit 1: Changing Physical and Human Landscapes</b>	<b>Section A: Core Themes</b>
Worth 40 per cent of the total marks	Two structured questions assessing Core Themes 5 and 6
Written examination: 1 hour 30 minutes, worth a total of 80 marks (+3 for writing accurately)	<b>Section B: Options</b>
<b>Section A: Core Themes</b>	One structured question (from a choice of two) assessing either Option Theme 7 or 8
Two structured questions assessing Core Themes 1 and 2	<b>Unit 3: Fieldwork Enquiry</b>
<b>Section B: Options</b>	Worth 20 per cent of the total marks
One structured question (from a choice of two) assessing either Option Theme 3 or 4	Non-examination: 2 hours 30 minutes, worth a total of 40 marks (+4 for writing accurately)
<b>Unit 2: Environmental and Development Issues</b>	Unit 3 requires a written report, to include evidence of understanding of the enquiry process and an independent ability to process/present data and complete extended writing. The report must be written in response to questions set by WJEC
Worth 40 per cent of the total marks	
Written examination: 1 hour 30 minutes, worth a total of 80 marks (+3 for writing accurately)	

## Summary of assessment: WJEC Eduqas GCSE (9–1) Geography A

There are three written examinations at the end of your studies. The structure of the assessment is summarised below:

<b>Component 1: Changing Physical and Human Landscapes</b>	<b>Component 3: Applied Fieldwork Enquiry</b>
Worth 35 per cent of the total marks Written examination: 1 hour 30 minutes, worth a total of 84 marks (+4 for writing accurately and using specialist terms)	Worth 30 per cent of the total marks Written examination: 1 hour 30 minutes, worth a total of 72 marks (+4 for writing accurately and using specialist terms)
<b>Section A: Core Themes</b> Two structured questions assessing Core Themes 1 and 2	A written examination in three parts using a variety of structured data response questions, some of which will require extended responses
<b>Section B: Options</b> One structured question (from a choice of two) assessing either Option Theme 3 or 4	<b>Part A</b> will assess approaches to fieldwork methodology, representation and analysis
<b>Component 2: Environmental and Development Issues</b>	<b>Part B</b> will assess how fieldwork enquiry may be used to investigate geography's conceptual frameworks
Worth 35 per cent of the total marks Written examination: 1 hour 30 minutes, worth a total of 84 marks (+4 for writing accurately and using specialist terms)	<b>Part C</b> will assess the application of broad geographical concepts to a wider UK context and assess the ability to make and justify a decision
<b>Section A: Core Themes</b> Two structured questions assessing Core Themes 5 and 6	
<b>Section B: Options</b> One structured question (from a choice of two) assessing either Option Theme 7 or 8	

# Preparing for the exam



Your examination will have the following assessment objectives. You need to:

- demonstrate knowledge of places, environments and processes at a variety of scales
- demonstrate understanding of places, environments, concepts and interrelationships at a variety of scales
- apply your knowledge and understanding to interpret, analyse and evaluate geographical information and issues and to make judgements
- select, adapt and use a variety of skills and techniques to investigate questions and issues and communicate findings.

Writing accurately will also be assessed in specified questions that require extended writing.

## Top tips for exam success

Examination technique is crucial to success. Think about the following basic rules:

- read and follow instructions carefully
- study resources and use evidence from them effectively in your answer
- understand the meaning of command words
- identify the key terms in a question, use these to plan your answer
- answer in sufficient detail and depth, be guided by the marks available for the question
- elaborate/develop points, turn one mark into two
- plan your answer before you start to write in questions needing extended writing

- use examples to demonstrate detailed knowledge
- use geographical terminology
- be able to draw good sketch maps and diagrams
- manage your time to ensure that you complete all questions and all to the same standard.

## What skills do I need to know about?

Twenty-five per cent of the overall mark available is for skills. These skills include being able to:

- select – choose an appropriate technique to process/present information or justify the selection of a particular technique
- adapt – describe ways in which a mathematical/statistical technique could be adapted, for example to add greater clarity
- use – interpret a map/graph, process information from a table, or present data graphically or cartographically, for example students may be asked to:
  - interpret patterns, trends, correlations or relationships shown on a variety of maps and graphs
  - calculate the mean in a table of data
  - complete a map or graph
  - use scale and grid references on OS maps
  - draw or interpret cross-sections.

Five per cent of all marks available will be for writing accurately. This will take into account the use of specialist language and the accuracy of your spelling, punctuation and grammar.

# Command words mix and match



Examination questions must have a command word which tells you what the examiner wants you to do. You need to understand the meaning of this command word and use it to give focus to your answer.

The following table gives the most commonly used command words in your GCSE course. Study the table carefully, then cover the column giving the meaning of the command word. How many can you remember? Reveal the meaning – repeat until you can give the meaning of all the command words.

Command word	Meaning
Annotate	Add explanatory notes to a map, photograph or diagram
Calculate	Work out a numerical answer/work out the value of something
Circle	Put a circle around the correct answer from a list of alternatives
Compare	Describe the similarities and differences between two things
Complete	Add the remaining detail and fill in the gaps in something like a diagram, table or sentence
Describe	Tell the examiner what you see/use lots of adjectives
Draw	Create a sketch map or diagram
Explain/ Give reasons	State why something exists or has happened
Give	Supply a basic response
Identify	Spot and single out from information you have been given
Justify	Give reasons to explain why you have made a decision or have an opinion
Label	Identify and mark on a diagram, picture, graph and so on
List	Identify and name individual features or items
Locate	Indicate or mark the position of something on a sketch, diagram or map

Command word	Meaning
Name	Give the word by which a feature is known
Outline	Give a brief account or summary of the main points
State	An alternative to 'Give/Identify/Name'. Supply a basic straightforward response
Study	Examine carefully
Suggest	Put forward an idea giving possible reasons for something you may not have studied
To what extent do you agree	Judge the importance of and/or success of something
What	Used to form a question concerned with selecting ideas/details/factors

## Now test yourself

TESTED

Rewrite the command words and meanings on pieces of card. Mix them up and see if you can match up the command word with its meaning.

### Exam tip

**Describe** and **explain** are two of the most commonly used command words. It is important in the examination that you are clear about what these command words are asking you to do. One of the most common mistakes is where students describe when they should be explaining or explain when they should be describing:

- **Describe:** just write what you see. You may be asked to describe a photograph, map or graph. Look at the mark allocation to work out how much detail you need to give. Remember, one mark is usually allocated for every point you make. Do not explain anything!
- **Explain/Give reasons for ....** these questions test your knowledge and understanding. You are being asked to say *why* something you may have already described is happening. If there are two marks for giving one reason then give a simple statement for the first mark and then elaborate/develop for the second mark. To write the elaboration ask yourself 'so what?'

## Effective revision

There are a huge variety of different techniques that people use to revise. You need to identify ones which work for you:

- Do you need complete silence to revise?
- Do you like music to help you concentrate?
- When do you like to revise? In the morning, evening, after lunch, ...?
- Do you have a room where you can revise? Is it well lit, with natural light?
- How long can you concentrate for without taking a break?

The average person struggles to concentrate for longer than 20 minutes without a change in focus.

Once you've decided what conditions you need for effective revision, then you need to construct your revision programme/timetable. Make sure you start early enough, make sure you that have a balance between work and leisure, and build in rewards.

- What parts of your social life are you prepared to give up for revision?
- How many weeks are you going to devote to revision?
- How are you going to divide those weeks? A whole day per subject? A different subject in the morning, afternoon and evening?
- Do you work well as part of a study group?
- Does your school provide revision classes?

You should complete your own revision planner and build up your own revision notes on each topic.

Remember, you are not alone: your teacher, parents and friends are all able to help. If at any time you feel you are not coping then be sure to talk to someone about it.

## Active revision

Your revision could be **active** or **passive**. Passive revision involves reading your notes. It is something which can only be used in short bursts, perhaps in the hours before an exam, so that information is stored in your short-term memory. After a short period of passive revision your attention will begin to wander – perhaps you will find yourself staring at a poster on the wall or listening to your music.

Active revision will involve you in **doing** something. This is more likely to hold your attention, help you remember facts and information and may help you produce something which you can use later in the revision process.

Simply having a revision file in which you produce your own punchy, neat revision notes, using your

class notes and textbook, is a very worthwhile exercise. Other examples that may work for you include:

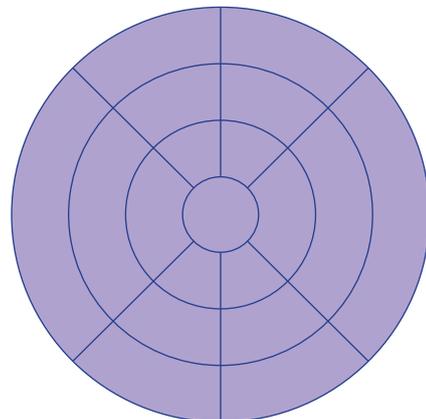
- Produce revision cards of important case studies/examples.
- Use a mind map to link key ideas in each theme. Mind maps need pictures, although remember this is not art! Drawing simple pictures is an extremely useful way of helping your memory retain information.
- Complete a wheel of knowledge for each theme and identify your strengths and weaknesses.
- Create cards with questions to test your knowledge and understanding. Produce another set of cards with answers to match the questions.
- Complete a book of important diagrams and maps that need to be learned. Label and annotate each diagram to identify and explain its main features.
- Produce a set of cards which contain important **key terms** for each of the themes. Go online and check out the WJEC website for a list of key terms.

## How to complete a wheel of knowledge

Write the title of the topic you are revising in the centre of the wheel, for example managing coastal hazards. Then write the important sub-topics in each of the boxes around the wheel, for example hard engineering.

Instructions for use:

- Use the traffic light system to colour code your confidence level in each of the sub-topics in this wheel of knowledge. (Green = very confident that you can answer exam questions on this sub-topic, orange = reasonably confident, red = not confident).
- You then need to read again the 'orange' or 'red' sub-topics, or see your teacher and talk to your study partners to get some extra help.



## What is the examiner looking for in your answer?

Generally, questions worth less than 6 or 8 marks are **points** marked. Many students lose marks in these questions because they do not give enough detail to score all the marks on offer. Always look at the marks available and make sure you make enough points to score all of these marks. Elaborate/develop points you make, turning one mark into two.

Questions worth 6 or 8 marks will be marked using a **levels** mark scheme. In answering these questions it is important to think about the structure of your answer and plan an answer that will address all parts of the question. You will achieve an A\*/A or 9-7 grade if you address all parts of the question, include detail, use correct geography terminology and include relevant examples.

Example:

*I will underline the command word and key words in the question. This will help me plan an answer.*

*Description is not enough. I must give reasons for the high mortality rates.*

**'Explain why infant mortality rates are high in many sub-Saharan countries.'** (6)

*Infant mortality is a key term. I need to show that I understand the meaning of this term and I need to demonstrate that I know what factors affect IMR, for example poor sanitation.*

*I need to focus on this region/give reasons why infant mortality is high in this region. I must include examples that I have studied such as malaria in Malawi.*

### Revision activity

Imagine you are an examiner. Write a points mark scheme in response to the following question: 'Suggest reasons to explain why education, of girls in particular, will reduce birth rates.' (4)

How many marks would you give this student's answer?

**Education is good for young women because it means that they will be able to get a job. Also they are more likely to give their own children a healthy diet.**

How could this student have improved this answer?

## The day of the examination

The big day has come! On the day of the examination:

- get up early, spend an hour looking over your revision notes (use your short-term memory)
- have some breakfast
- arrive at the examination room with plenty of time to spare
- listen to the invigilator
- know your centre and candidate number
- have the correct equipment for the exam (and bring a spare pen)
- make sure you answer all the questions
- remember the rules of the game
- never leave the examination room until you have used all of the time available for the examination

and ... Good luck!