

GCSE Geography (9-1) – Key messages

The information outlined below applies to both GCSE A and B, unless indicated otherwise.

Assessment

Practice papers for mock exams

A second set of sample assessment materials, which we are calling Practice papers will be available late in the autumn term in preparation for mock exams. These will be full sets of papers and mark schemes (like the SAMs). These will be available via Interchange so they are not accessible to students.

There is considerable topic content overlap between GCSE A & B and so you can use the questions from the Practice Papers (for the alternative GCSE qualification) as the assessment objectives are the same, especially for fieldwork.

Guides to Sample Assessment Materials (SAMs)

Guides to the SAMs are a detailed overview of the assessment objectives and question styles, these can be downloaded from the respective qualification pages (GCSE A and GCSE B) under Assessment preparation then sample assessment materials.

There is considerable topic content overlap between GCSE A & B and so you can use the questions from the SAMs (for the alternative GCSE qualification) as the assessment objectives are the same, especially for fieldwork.

Level marked questions

The level marked medium tariff questions begin at 6 marks. The 8 and 12 mark questions are considered to be high tariff, extended response questions (see below).

J383 (GCSE A)	J384 (GCSE B)
Components 01 & 02 will include 6, 8 and 12 mark questions.	Components 01 & 02 will include 6 mark or 8 mark questions.
Component 03 will include 6 and 8 mark questions.	Component 03 will include 6 mark and 12 mark questions.

NB – The components across GCSE A and GCSE B have to be comparable in terms of question tariffs i.e. the number of (multiple choice questions, 6, 8 and 12 markers)

Extended response questions

Quality of extended responses (QER) is in 12 and 8 mark questions. In 12 mark questions there are 4 levels and for 8 mark questions there are only 3 levels.

Quality of extended responses is part of the levels and is assessed holistically along with the rest of the descriptors in each level. There are no set marks available for quality of extended responses – it is one thing to consider in the holistic review of the answer. But the ‘geography’ in the answer should always be the main concern when awarding a level to a response. The guides to the SAMs explain the descriptors for the QER.

SPaG

Also known as spelling, punctuation and grammar and the use of specialist terminology is assessed against one of the longer questions in the exam with 3 marks available.

SPaG will be attached to the highest tariff question in each component (paper). There will only be one question in each component with SPaG, so 3 marks per component as shown in the grid within the specifications (GCSE A page 17 and GCSE B page 21).

There are clear descriptors for each level of SPaG, which are separate from the geographical content of the rest of the question. The students answer is read holistically and the SPaG marks are awarded on the whole answer. These descriptors can be found on the last page of the mark schemes in the SAMs.

Marking guidance

At the beginning of each mark scheme there is a table to help you understand the level based mark scheme (for question tariffs of 6 marks and above). The wording in each level (from basic to comprehensive) indicates how answers develop and progress within each assessment objective (AO1 – AO3).

How important are command terms?

This is discussed in a blog article along with command term definitions, which can be found in [geography news](#).

Getting students prepared for their first assessments – CPD

This training course in Jan & Feb 2018, explores a variety of techniques with which teachers can get students prepared for their examinations. The day will include discussions on revision techniques, styles and demands of exam questions including command terms, varying tariffs and case studies. How students can prepare for questions which target geographical and fieldwork skills. There will be opportunities to discuss extended response questions which include the 8 and 12 mark questions. [Information on the CPD hub](#).

9-1 grade information (Ofqual)

The most current information on the 9-1 grading structure can be found on the [Ofqual website](#) this includes:

- [Grading new GCSEs from 2017](#)
- [Grade descriptors](#)
- [Geography grade descriptors](#)
- [Ofqual Blog - Setting grade 9 in the new GCSEs](#)

Grade boundaries

These are not set until after the students complete their examinations. What is important to note is that there need to be comparative outcomes between the legacy and reformed qualifications in terms of what grades students achieve. There is more information about this on our website as there is a [blog article by Dr Frances Wilson](#).

Specification

Within the topics of the specification we have used the terms 'such as' and 'including'. The term 'such as' is used to exemplify bullet points in the specification however 'including' means students could be directly examined on this content. This arose when the spec was being developed and teacher feedback was to have clarity with some of the content areas.

Case studies are clearly indicated and these vary in depth and complexity across topics.

Geographical skills

To help support the teaching of geographical skills listed in the specifications on pages 13-14 (GCSE A) and 17-18 (GCSE B) we have produced two story maps, these can be access via Geography News on the homepage:

[GCSE Geography Maps](#)

[GCSE Geography graphs and charts](#)

Fieldwork skills

The GCSE specifications have a little 'F' in the scale column to indicate where there are potential areas / topics within which fieldwork could take place.

Fieldwork will be assessed through learners' own experiences of fieldwork as well as unfamiliar contexts. The unfamiliar contexts are indicated in the Sample Assessment Materials by the inclusion of resources e.g. GCSE A – Component 03 qu4 (d) GCSE B – Component 01 qu5 (d). The assessment objectives for the fieldwork questions are either measuring AO4 (Skills) or AO3 (Application), for further information please see the specification GCSE A (p18) and GCSE B (p22).

Fieldwork skills can be assessed for physical, human or both in any set of assessments. Learners will be assessed on the following (as listed in the specifications):

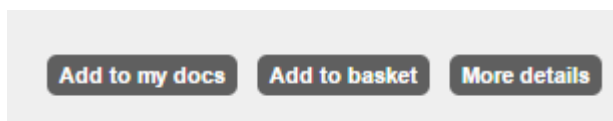
- i. Understanding of the kinds of question capable of being investigated through fieldwork and an understanding of the geographical enquiry processes appropriate to investigate these.
- ii. Understanding of the range of techniques and methods used in fieldwork, including observation and different kinds of measurement.
- iii. Processing and presenting fieldwork data in various ways including maps, graphs and diagrams.
- iv. Analysing and explaining data collected in the field using knowledge of relevant geographical case studies and theories.
- v. Drawing evidenced conclusions and summaries from fieldwork transcripts and data.
- vi. Reflecting critically on fieldwork data, methods used, conclusions drawn and knowledge gained.

If you wanted ideas for potential fieldwork questions you could use legacy controlled assessment titles and a great resource can be purchased from the [Geographical Association website](#).

CPD

The [CPD hub](#) contains all the information for booking CPD (the most current are listed at the top) and there are a mixture of face to face and webinars available. Half termly [free Q&A webinars](#) with the Geography Subject Advisor where you can ask anything about the qualifications.

You can also download materials from previous CPD courses, this is indicated by the following buttons:



Useful materials for download include

- Assessment
- Embedding geographical skills
- Fieldwork.

Teaching and learning resources

Delivery Guides

These delivery guides are online and can be found under planning and teaching. Each delivery guide gives an overview of the topic, ideas for teaching and learning as well as bespoke resources.

Scheme of work builder

This online tool enables you to create and export your own schemes of work. You can move the specification content into a suitable order for your teaching and the Delivery Guide teaching and learning resources will be embedded within your scheme of work. The Scheme of Work Builder can be found under the Planning and Teaching tab on the relevant GCSE page.

Support

[Schoolology](#) online platform for teachers to share resources / ideas / questions. Log in details can be found here: [Schoolology – the NEW Geography ‘ning’](#)

[New country classifications](#) listed [geography news article](#) to explain the new country classifications

The curriculum planner ([GCSE A](#) and [GCSE B](#)) gives you an over view of the topics and potential organisation for teaching