



Pearson Edexcel GCSE (9–1) Geography A

Year 11 Revision Support





What are we going to cover?

- The structure, content and assessment of GCSE Geography
- Changes to Paper 3 – 2021 only (familiar vs unfamiliar fieldwork)
- Command words
- Exam technique – how to succeed with the 8-mark questions
- Pink Sheets and Revision Guides – targeting areas of weakness





Specification Overview

Geography A: Geographical Themes and Challenges			
	Paper 1: The Physical Environment	Paper 2: The Human Environment	Paper 3: Geographical Investigations
Content overview	<p>The changing landscapes of the UK Two studies from three UK landscapes: coastal, river or glaciated landscapes</p> <p>Weather hazards and climate change Two studies, one of tropical cyclones and one of drought</p> <p>Ecosystems, biodiversity and management Two studies, one of tropical rainforests and one of deciduous woodlands</p>	<p>Changing cities Case studies of one major UK city and one city in a developing or emerging country</p> <p>Global development Case study of a developing or emerging country</p> <p>Resource management A study of energy or water</p>	<p>Fieldwork</p> <p>UK Challenges A study drawing across knowledge and understanding from The Physical Environment and The Human Environment relating to four key challenges facing the UK:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• resource consumption and environmental sustainability• settlement, population and economic• landscape• climate change
Assessment overview	37.5%; 94 marks 1 hour 30 minutes exam	37.5%; 94 marks 1 hour 30 minutes exam	25%; 64 marks 1 hour 30 minutes exam





Assessment Overview

Content	Total marks	Suggested Time (minutes)	Max. mark tariff
PAPER 1: The Physical Environment			
Section A: The changing landscapes of the UK	30	30	2 x 8 marks
Section B: Weather hazards and climate change	30	30	1 x 8 marks
Section C: Ecosystems, biodiversity and management	34	30	1 x 8 marks plus 4 SPGST marks
PAPER 2: The Human Environment			
Section A: Changing cities	30	30	1 x 8 marks
Section B: Global development	30	30	1 x 8 marks
Section C: Resource management	34	30	1 x 8 marks plus 4 SPGST marks
PAPER 3: Fieldwork and UK Challenges			
Section A: Geographical Investigations – physical	18 (10 in 2021)	20	1 x 8 marks
Section B: Geographical Investigations – human	18 (10 in 2021)	20	1 x 8 marks
Section C: UK Challenges	28	35	1 x 12 marks plus 4 marks of SPGST



Familiar

Students will need to answer QS about their own fieldwork experience in both the human and physical environment. Questions on any part of the enquiry process can be asked. All questions will only target AO3 and AO4



(1) Identification of the question



(2) Contextualising the fieldwork



(3) Design: where and how many?



(4) Equipment considerations; how to record. Primary data collection



(5) Data processing and presentation



(6) Analysis and conclusions



(7) Critically reflecting on the results

Unfamiliar

Students will need to answer questions based around an unfamiliar fieldwork scenario presented in the exam, in both the human and physical environment. Questions on any part of the enquiry process can be asked. All questions will only target AO3 and AO4



Familiar

(iv) You developed at least **one** question or hypothesis to help you investigate a river you have studied.

Explain how this question or hypothesis helped your investigation.

Hypothesis or key question

(a) You have studied a river landscape as part of your fieldwork.

(i) Explain **one** advantage of a qualitative fieldwork method you used.

Named qualitative fieldwork method

(ii) Explain **one** way the secondary data you collected supported your investigation.

(iii) Explain **one** advantage of the type of graph you used to present fieldwork data.

Type of graph

(e) You have studied an urban area as part of your fieldwork.

Assess the extent to which your conclusions answered the enquiry question(s).

(3)

(3)

(2)

(8)

(1) Identification of the question

(2) Contextualising the fieldwork

(3) Design: where and how many?

(4) Equipment considerations; how to record. Primary data collection

(5) Data processing and presentation

(6) Analysis and conclusions

(7) Critically reflecting on the results

Unfamiliar

(b) Study Figure 3a in the Resource Booklet.

(i) State the purpose of this fieldwork method.

(ii) Suggest **two** problems that the students' choice of locations may have caused for data collection.

(a) Identify which **one** of the following is a quantitative fieldwork method.

- A interview
- B newspaper article
- C pedestrian count
- D street observation

(ii) Explain **one** limitation of using this fieldwork method.

Study Figure 1 in the Resource Booklet.

(b) Evaluate the accuracy and reliability of the fieldwork methods shown in Figure 1.

The students concluded that housing cost and closeness to family and friends were the most important factors overall.

Assess the evidence for this conclusion.



Command Words

Command Word	Definition
Identify/State/Name	Recall or select one or more pieces of information.
Define	State the meaning of a term.
Calculate	Produce a numerical answer, showing relevant working.
Draw/plot	Create a graphical representation of geographical information.
Label	Add a label/labels to a given resource, graphic or image.
Describe	Give an account of the main characteristics of something or the steps in a process. Statements in the response should be developed but do not need to include a justification or reason.
Compare	Find the similarities and differences of two elements given in a question. Each response must relate to both elements and must include a statement of their similarity/difference.
Explain	Provide a reasoned explanation of how or why something occurs. An explanation requires a justification/exemplification of a point. Some questions will require the use of annotated diagrams to support explanation.
Suggest	Apply understanding to provide a reasoned explanation of how or why something may occur. A suggested explanation requires a justification/exemplification of a point.
Examine	Break something down into individual components/processes and say how each one individually contributes to the question's theme/topic and how the components/processes work together and interrelate.
Assess	Use evidence to determine the relative significance of something. Give consideration to all factors and identify which are the most important.

Discuss	Explore the strengths and weaknesses of different sides of an issue/question. Investigate the issue by reasoning or argument.
Evaluate	Measure the value or success of something and ultimately provide a substantiated judgement/conclusion. Review information and then bring it together to form a conclusion, drawing on evidence such as strengths, weaknesses, alternatives and relevant data.



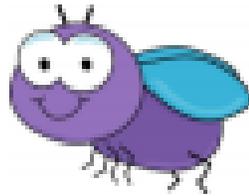
Exam technique – how to succeed with the 8-mark questions

- Focus on the command word in the question
- Ensure that you are familiar with key geographical terms
- Develop the ‘chain of explanation’ using link phrases (e.g. ‘this leads to’ or ‘this means that’)
- Be aware that ‘Examine’ questions require you to extract information from the resource and use this material to answer the question
- ‘Assess’ and ‘Evaluate’ questions require you write a conclusion that provides your opinion about which factor(s) is the most important, whether the advantages outweigh the disadvantages etc.



Exam technique – some strategies to try?

1. De-coding the question (**BUG** or **CUBE** the question)



BUG the question

- B**ox the command word
- U**nderline the geography
- G**lance back at the question as you write the answer



CUBE the question

- C**ircle the command word
- U**nderline the key geographical words
- B**ox any figures you must refer to
- E**xplain the question in your own words



2. Use of reflective language

A useful strategy to help students get to grips with the demands of 'assess', 'evaluate' and 'discuss' extent' is to use evaluative language in answers; when a student does this, it shows that they are considering different perspectives, arguments and positions:

Therefore **Yet**
Alternatively
However **Significantly**
Importantly **Concluding**
Overall **Although**
Similarly
Whereas



3. Balance your argument

Students should approach this type of question by:

- Avoiding the extremes (i.e. completely agreeing or disagreeing) because such answers risk being very unbalanced and one-sided which will usually not show an understanding of the complexity of the geographical issue.
- Avoid the 'no argument' position: such answers do not address the command word 'to what extent' and will result in a weaker response.
- Consider viewpoints different to their own – this will help create a more balanced answer.

It may help candidates to think of answers to this style of question as falling somewhere on a spectrum as shown in the table below, with the 'agree/disagree but...' approach often leading to the best responses:

Extreme agreement	Agree, but considers both sides	No argument	Disagree, but considers both sides	Extreme disagreement
Development will create pressures	Development will create pressures – but there might also be some advantages	Development might or might not create pressures	Development might create pressures – but the advantages will out-weigh disadvantages	Development will not create any pressures



4. PEEL

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 back to the question.

PEEL (Point, Evidence, Explanation, Link) sentence starters are a useful way to focus students and structure their responses to extended writing questions more effectively:

Point	Evidence	Explanation	Link
It has been suggested that...	Figure X clearly shows ...	The trend in Figure X goes up because ...	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...	Figure X tells us that ...	This evidence explains that ...	This also links to the idea that ...
One argument that...	Figure X suggests that ...	This means that ...	This is what I expected because ...
One school of thought is that ...	The evidence provided from Figure X suggests ...	This supports my argument because ...	It is clear that ...
One of the main causes/advantages ...	The pattern on Figure X suggests ...	This demonstrates that ...	Therefore, I can conclude that ...



5. Use of a 'washing line'

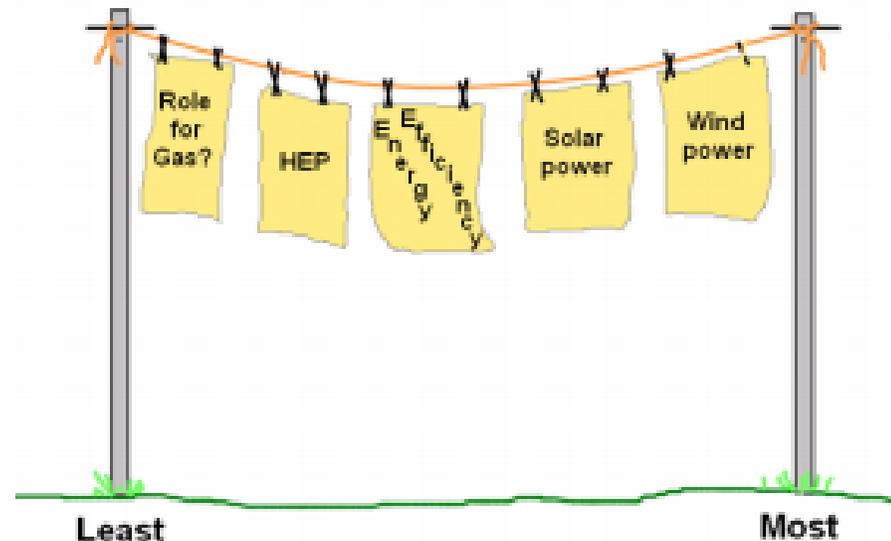
This is a useful strategy where a 'washing line' is used to arrange factors in order of importance. This is useful for extended response questions that imply that a range of factors/approaches/solutions need to be considered. This type of approach is useful in terms of planning, organising thoughts and providing a structure to use when writing the answer. A good example of this is Paper 2, question 4e:

(e) Evaluate different approaches used by **either** a named developing or emerging country to manage and use energy resources in a sustainable way.

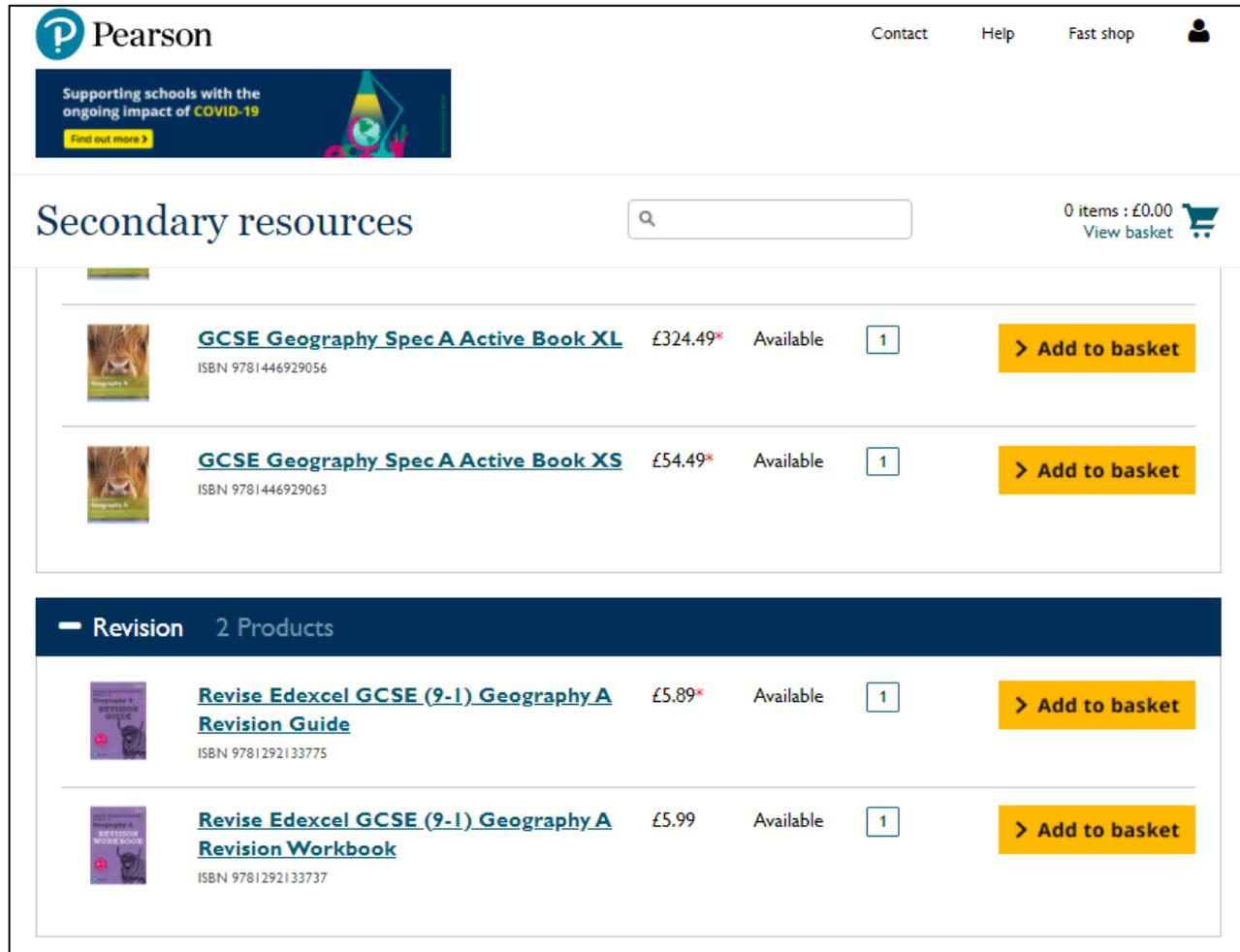
(8)

Named developing or emerging country

When planning an answer for this type of question, students might consider the possible renewable energy sources that could be discussed and arrange them on a 'washing line' from the most to least suitable in terms of sustainability. It is inevitable that renewable energy will feature heavily in the answer, but other energy sources could be considered such as natural gas (the 'cleanest' fossil fuel, widely available and currently low cost).



The Revision Guide and Revision Workbook



The screenshot shows the Pearson website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the Pearson logo, 'Contact', 'Help', 'Fast shop', and a user icon. Below this is a banner for 'Supporting schools with the ongoing impact of COVID-19' with a 'Find out more' button. The main content area is titled 'Secondary resources' and includes a search bar and a shopping cart icon showing '0 items : £0.00'. There are two product listings for 'GCSE Geography Spec A Active Book' (XL and XS) and two listings for 'Revise Edexcel GCSE (9-1) Geography A' (Revision Guide and Revision Workbook). Each listing includes a small image of the book cover, the title, price, availability, a quantity selector (set to 1), and an 'Add to basket' button.

Product Name	Price	Availability	Quantity	Action
GCSE Geography Spec A Active Book XL ISBN 9781446929056	£324.49*	Available	1	> Add to basket
GCSE Geography Spec A Active Book XS ISBN 9781446929063	£54.49*	Available	1	> Add to basket
Revision 2 Products				
Revise Edexcel GCSE (9-1) Geography A Revision Guide ISBN 9781292133775	£5.89*	Available	1	> Add to basket
Revise Edexcel GCSE (9-1) Geography A Revision Workbook ISBN 9781292133737	£5.99	Available	1	> Add to basket

<https://www.pearsonschoolsandfecolleges.co.uk/Secondary/Geography/14-16/EdexcelGeographyGCSESpecificationA2016/buy/buy.aspx>

