

# GCE

Revised Specification

geography

How to Improve Performance  
in Our Examinations.

# Revised Specification: **GCE Geography** How to Improve Performance in Our Examinations.



This guide is based on an article which first appeared in QDS, Summer 2008. It focuses on hot tips for improving your performance in our revised GCE Geography qualification.



## **10 hot tips for helping you achieve your best.**

### **1. Read and follow instructions carefully**

You should read the instructions carefully on the front cover of the examination paper, as well as the questions themselves. In particular:

- Units AS/1 and AS/2 - you must answer all of Section A, all of Section B, but choose only two questions from the three in Section C.
- Unit A2/1 - you must answer two questions in Section A, one from each of the two optional units studied and one question from Section B.
- Unit A2/2 - you must answer two questions in Section A, one from each of the two optional units studied and all of Section B the Decision Making Exercise.

### **2. Deconstruct the question**

No question ever requires you to write all you know about a particular topic. Rather, you need to tailor your knowledge to the demands of the question set. It is important that you understand and take note of command words used, such as *identify....*, *describe....*, *explain....*, *discuss....* and to know the difference between them.

You should also ensure that you know what the range and scope of the question involves; for example, *causes*, *consequences*, *change over time*, *change over space*. You might also find it useful to highlight or underline key words directly on your examination question paper.

### 3. Case studies

It is important that you use case study material correctly to address the specific demands of the question. The specification will indicate that you use a case study of an appropriate scale, such as, small scale, regional scale, national scale, global scale. It will also indicate the level of detail required; for example, in some cases you may be required to make reference to places for illustration purposes only.

### 4. Give detailed answers

Examiners report frequently that examination answers are vague or generalised. Such answers are often, inevitably, limited to Level 1 marks. Answers should be focused and detailed and refer to place-specific details for case studies.

### 5. Use resources effectively

You should know how to extract relevant information from photographs, maps, text, diagrams, data and graphs to answer the question effectively. This is particularly important where the question includes the phrase, *use these resources to help you*.

### 6. Use past papers

The use of specimen papers and past papers (from January 2009 onwards) will provide you with opportunities to practice examination technique, become familiar with the layout and structure of papers and to answer questions under timed conditions.

### 7. Use the language of geography

The Chief Examiner often highlights the need for learners to use subject-specific terminology in their answers.

### 8. Fieldwork skills (AS/1)

You need to be well prepared for the assessment of fieldwork skills. As well as carrying out the fieldwork and producing a table of data, you need to be able to:

- show awareness of fieldwork safety;
- present results in cartographic and diagrammatic form;
- describe, analyse, evaluate and interpret evidence and draw conclusions; and
- evaluate your methods and approaches to enquiry and the limitations of the evidence collected and conclusions drawn.

### 9. Use diagrams

The use of a diagram can often provide a succinct and effective means of conveying an answer. In some cases the question will require a diagram as part of the answer, in which case the question will contain a statement such as, *with the aid of an annotated diagram....* Diagrams need to be well drawn, presented and labelled.

### 10. Decision Making Exercise (A2/2)

You should follow carefully the instructions provided on the front of the examination question paper. In doing so, you must:

- adopt and maintain the given role;
- make full use of the resources and information provided;
- use the report structure given;
- not reproduce the resources verbatim – paraphrasing and selective use is more effective; and
- acknowledge all direct quotations used; for example, Mr Corduff, a local farmer, said that, *“we will do anything to save our land and our livelihoods”*.

#### Information

For copies for the GCE Geography specification, specimen papers and mark schemes and other relevant information please visit:  
[www.ccea.org.uk/geography](http://www.ccea.org.uk/geography)

