

A Level Geography: Linear Specification

Exam Board: Edexcel



Welcome

Why should you study A-level geography?

1. **It helps you understand the world.** Geography explores issues such as climate change, globalisation, migration, urbanisation, natural hazards and resource management, helping you understand how people and environments interact.
2. **It develops valuable skills.** You'll learn to analyse data, interpret maps and graphs, conduct fieldwork, evaluate evidence and write well-reasoned arguments. These skills are useful in both higher education and many careers.
3. **It combines science and social science.** Geography links physical processes (such as rivers, coasts and ecosystems) with human topics (such as cities, development and geopolitics), giving you a broad perspective.
4. **It is relevant to current global challenges.** Topics like sustainability, biodiversity loss and climate adaptation are increasingly important for governments, businesses and communities.
5. **It keeps career options open.** Geography is respected by universities and employers and can lead to careers in environmental management, urban planning, conservation, surveying, teaching, GIS, international development, business, and many other fields.

Content and assessment overview:

Paper 1 (*Paper code: 9GE0/01)
<i>Written examination: 2 hours and 15 minutes</i> <i>30% of the qualification</i> <i>105 marks</i>
Content overview • Area of study 1, Topic 1: Tectonic Processes and Hazards • Area of study 1, Topic 2: 2B Coastal Landscapes and Change • Area of study 3, Topic 5: The Water Cycle and Water Insecurity • Area of study 3, Topic 6: The Carbon Cycle and Energy Security
Assessment overview An externally-assessed written examination comprising three sections. Section A relates to Topic 1: Tectonic Processes and Hazards. Section B relates to Topic 2: Landscape Systems, Processes and Change. Students answer questions on either Topic 2A: Glaciated Landscapes and Change or Topic 2B: Coastal Landscapes and Change. Section C relates to Topic 5: The Water Cycle and Water Insecurity and Topic 6: The Carbon Cycle and Energy Security. The examination may include short open, open response and resource-linked questions. The examination includes 12-mark and 20-mark extended writing questions. Calculators may be used.

Paper 2 (Paper code: 9GE0/02)**Written examination: 2 hours and 15 minutes****30% of the qualification****105 marks****Content overview**

- Area of study 2, Topic 3: Globalisation
- Area of study 2, Topic 4: Shaping Places – including optional sub-topics from which students choose one from two: 4A Regenerating Places or 4B Diverse Places
- Area of study 4, Topic 7: Superpowers
- Area of study 4, Topic 8: Global Development and Connections – including optional sub-topics from which students choose one from two: 8A Health, Human Rights and Intervention or 8B Migration, Identity and Sovereignty

Assessment overview

An externally-assessed written examination comprising three sections.

Section A relates to Topics 3 and 7: Globalisation / Superpowers.

Section B relates to Topic 4: Shaping Places. Students answer questions on either Topic 4A: Regenerating Places or Topic 4B: Diverse Places.

Section C relates to Topic 8: Global Development and Connections. Students answer questions on either Topic 8A: Health, Human Rights and Intervention or Topic 8B: Migration, Identity and Sovereignty.

The examination may include short open, open response and resource-linked questions. The examination includes 12-mark and 20-mark extended writing questions. Calculators may be used.

Paper 3 (*Paper code: 9GE0/03)**Written examination: 2 hours and 15 minutes****20% of the qualification****70 marks****Content overview**

The specification contains three synoptic themes within the compulsory content areas:

- Players
- Attitudes and actions
- Futures and uncertainties.

The synoptic investigation will be based on a geographical issue within a place-based context that links to the three synoptic themes and is rooted in two or more of the compulsory content areas.

Assessment overview

An externally-assessed written examination comprising three sections. A resource booklet will contain information about the geographical issue.

Sections A, B and C all draw synoptically on knowledge and understanding from compulsory content drawn from different parts of the course.

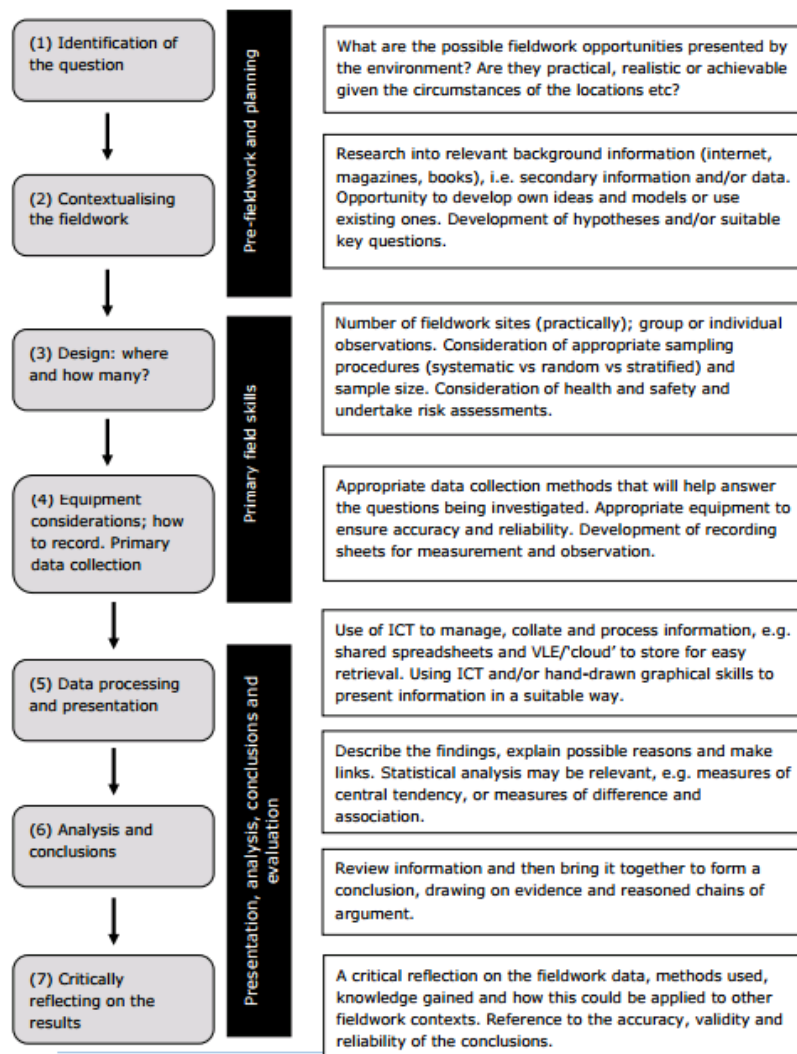
The examination may include short open, open response and resource-linked questions. The examination includes 8-mark, 18-mark and 24-mark extended writing questions. Calculators may be used.

Synoptic Themes:

1. Players (P)	Who are the different players (individuals, groups and organisations, stakeholders) involved in geographical issues and decisions (interdependence, globalisation, systems)? Why do some players have greater influence than others (inequality)? This includes: international players (intergovernmental organisations (IGOs)), national and local government, large and small private businesses, transnational corporations (TNCs), pressure groups and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) as well as others in particular contexts.
2. Attitudes and actions (A)	Why do attitudes to geographical issues (identity) vary so greatly and how does these influence actions (policies and choice of strategy and management methods)? Influences on values and attitudes include identity, political and religious views, priority given to profit, importance of social justice and equality and attitudes towards the natural environment (conservation and sustainability versus exploitation).
3. Futures and uncertainties (F)	There are contrasting approaches when making decisions about geographical issues that will affect people in the future. These include business as usual, priority towards more sustainable strategies and radical alternatives (mitigation and adaptation). Choice of objective will affect both people and the environment in very different ways (risk, resilience and thresholds). The outcomes of choices made today are uncertain for a range of reasons, including scientific, demographic, economic and political uncertainty.

Coursework:

Coursework: Independent Investigation (9GE0/04)
<i>Non-examined assessment</i> <i>20% of the qualification</i> <i>70 marks</i>
Content overview • The student defines a question or issue for investigation, relating to the compulsory or optional content. The topic may relate to any aspect of geography contained within the specification • The student's investigation will incorporate fieldwork data (collected individually or as part of a group) and own research and/or secondary data • The fieldwork, which forms the focus and context of the individual investigation, may be either human, physical or integrated physical-human • The investigation report will evidence independent analysis and evaluation of data, presentation of data findings and extended writing • Students will be expected to show evidence that they have used both quantitative and qualitative data to support their independent investigation as appropriate to the particular environment and/or location.
Assessment overview • The investigation report is internally assessed and externally moderated. • The student will produce a written report of 3000–4000 words.



Exam command word definitions:

Command Word	Definition
Analyse	Use geographical skills to investigate an issue by systematically breaking it down into individual components and making it logical, evidence-based connections on the causes and effects or interrelationships between the components.
Assess	Use evidence to determine the relative significance of something. Give balanced consideration to all factors and identify which are the most important.
Complete	Create a graphical representation of geographical information by adding detail to a resource that has been provided.
Draw/Plot	Create a graphical representation of geographical information.
Evaluate	Measure the value or success of something and ultimately provide a balanced and 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.
Explain	Provide a reasoned explanation of how or why something occurs. An explanation requires understanding to be demonstrated through the justification or exemplification of points that have been identified.
Suggest	For an unfamiliar scenario, provide a reasoned explanation of how or why something may occur. A suggested explanation requires a justification/exemplification of a point that has been identified.

Command words by mark tariff:

Mark Tariff	1	2	3	4	6	8	9	12	16	18	20	24
Complete	*	*	*	*								
Draw/ Plot	*	*	*	*								
Suggest			*		*							
Explain				*	*	*						
Analyse						*						
Assess							*	*				
Evaluate									*	*	*	*

Assessment Objectives:

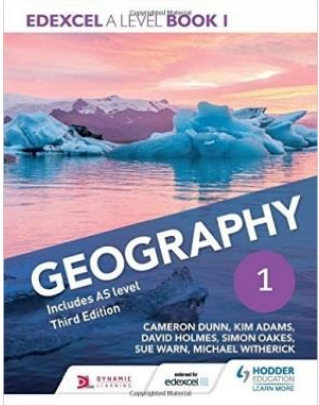
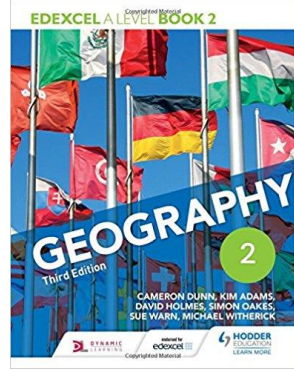
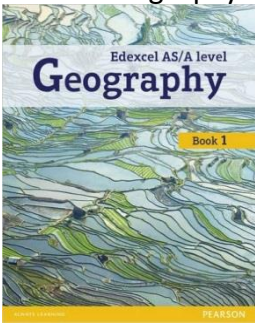
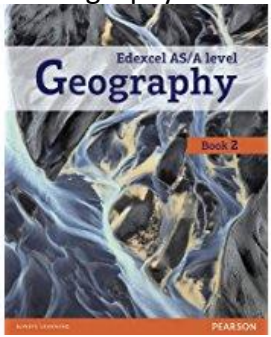
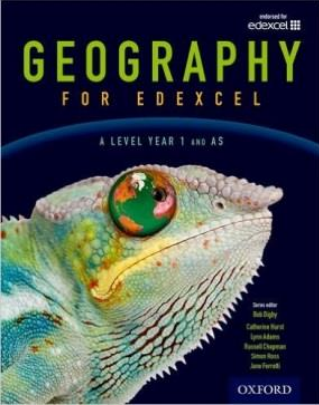
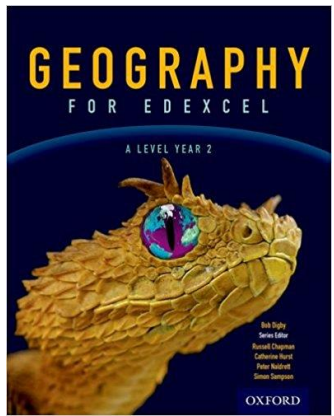
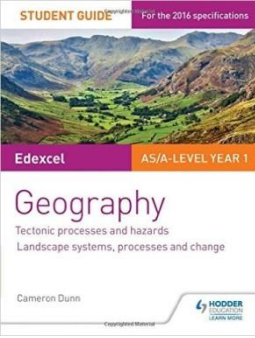
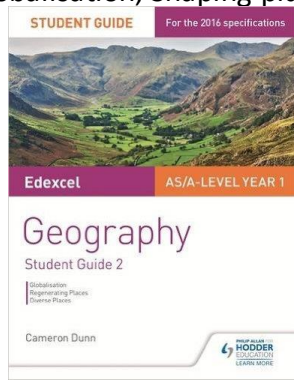
Students must:		% in GCE A Level (100)
AO1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of places, environments, concepts, processes, interactions and change, at a variety of scales	34
AO2	Apply knowledge and understanding in different contexts to interpret, analyse and evaluate geographical information and issues	40
AO3	Use a variety of relevant quantitative, qualitative and fieldwork skills to: - investigate geographical questions and issues - interpret, analyse and evaluate data and evidence - construct arguments and draw conclusions	26

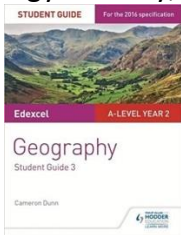
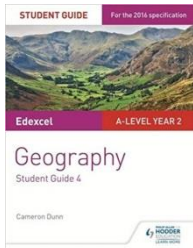
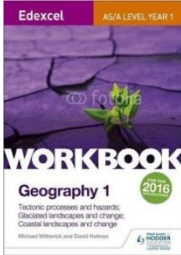
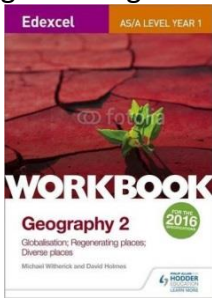
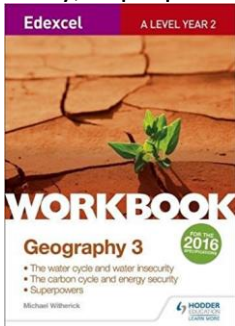
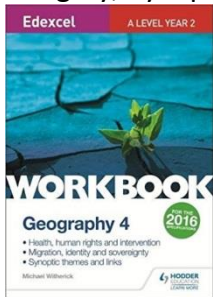
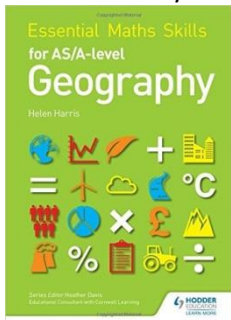
Extended writing and Level Banded Mark Schemes

		Total	AO1	AO2	AO3
Command Word	Explain	6	6		
	Explain (resource-based)	6	3	3	
	Explain	8	8		
	Assess	12	3	9	
	Evaluate	20	5	15	
	Synoptic Paper: Analyse	8	4		4
	Synoptic Paper: Evaluate	18	3	9	6
	Synoptic Paper: Evaluate	24	4	12	8

RESOURCES AVAILABLE

Relevant publications should you wish to invest in them as a personal copy have been listed below.

Edexcel A level Geography Book 1 Third Edition 	Edexcel A Level Geography Book 2 Third Edition 
Edexcel GCE Geography Y1 A Level Student Book and eBook (Edexcel Geography A Level 2016) 	Edexcel GCE Geography Y2 A Level: Student book (Edexcel Geography A Level 2016) 
Geography for Edexcel A Level Year 1 and AS Student Book 	Geography for Edexcel A Level Year 2 Student Book 
Edexcel AS/A-level Geography Student Guide 1: Tectonic Processes and Hazards; Landscape systems, processes and change 	Edexcel AS/A-level Geography Student Guide 2: Globalisation; Shaping places 

Edexcel A-level Year 2 Geography Student Guide 3: The Water Cycle and Water Insecurity; The Carbon Cycle and Energy Security; Superpowers 	Edexcel A-level Year 2 Geography Student Guide 4: Synoptic thinking and Skills for the Independent Investigation 
Edexcel AS/A-level Geography Workbook 1: Tectonic processes and hazards; Glaciated landscapes and change; Coastal landscapes and change 	Edexcel AS/A-level Geography Workbook 2: Globalisation; Regenerating Places; Diverse Places 
Edexcel A Level Geography Workbook 3: Water cycle and water insecurity; Carbon cycle and energy security; Superpowers. 	Edexcel A Level Geography Workbook 4: Health, human rights and intervention; Migration, identity and sovereignty; Synoptic themes 
	Essential Maths Skills for AS/A-level Geography 

How to get an A*

1. Know the assessment objectives

Edexcel assesses three main skills:

- **AO1 (Knowledge):** Accurate geographical facts, concepts and case studies.
- **AO2 (Application):** Apply your knowledge to the specific question and any resource provided.
- **AO3 (Evaluation):** Analyse evidence, compare viewpoints and make well-supported judgements.

The highest-mark answers balance all three rather than focusing only on memorised content.

2. Build strong case studies

Have a detailed case study for every major topic. For each one, know:

- Location
- Causes
- Impacts
- Responses
- Key statistics (5–10 memorable facts)
- How it links to geographical theories or concepts

Examiners reward using examples to support an argument, not simply recounting everything you know about a place.

3. Structure 20-mark essays

A reliable structure is:

- **Introduction (2–3 sentences):** Define key terms and state your overall line of argument.
- **Paragraph 1:** Point → evidence → explanation → evaluation.
- **Paragraph 2:** Point → evidence → explanation → evaluation.
- **Paragraph 3:** Point → evidence → explanation → evaluation.
- **Conclusion:** Answer the question directly and explain why your judgement is stronger than the alternatives.

Instead of leaving evaluation until the end, include it throughout.

4. Use geographical concepts

Edexcel particularly values conceptual understanding. Look for opportunities to discuss ideas such as:

- Place
- Scale
- Interdependence
- Inequality
- Sustainability
- Globalisation
- Risk
- Resilience
- Governance
- Systems and feedback

These concepts help show a deeper level of understanding.

5. Practise with the Resource Booklet

Many questions include figures, maps, graphs or photographs. Make sure you:

- Refer to the resource directly.
- Combine it with your own knowledge.
- Don't rely only on the resource or ignore it completely.

6. Do timed practice

Aim to complete:

- One **20-marker** each week.
- Two or three **12-markers**.
- Several shorter questions.

Then compare your answers against the mark scheme and examiner reports to see what is needed for the highest level.

7. Learn from examiner reports

Common reasons students miss top marks include:

- Describing instead of analysing.
- Giving generic case studies with little detail.
- Not answering the specific wording of the question.
- Writing long introductions.
- Making conclusions without supporting evidence.

8. Revision plan

September–December

- Make concise notes.
- Build flashcards.
- Learn case studies.

January–March

- Complete topic-based past questions.
- Memorise key statistics.
- Improve essay structure.

April–Exams

- Complete full past papers under timed conditions.
- Review mistakes.
- Focus revision on weaker topics.

Resources worth using

- The official Edexcel specification (use it as a revision checklist).
- Edexcel past papers and mark schemes.
- Examiner reports.
- Your textbook and class notes.

What an A* answer sounds like

Instead of: Climate change increases flooding.

Aim for: Although climate change has increased the frequency of extreme rainfall events, the severity of flood impacts often depends more on governance, land-use planning and socioeconomic vulnerability. Therefore, while climate change is a major driver of risk, human decisions frequently determine the scale of damage.

That kind of balanced, evidence-based judgement is characteristic of the highest-level responses.