

Subject specific vocabulary

The following subject specific vocabulary provides definitions of key Geography terms used in our A-level Geography (7037) specification.

All terms stated in the specification can be used in the examinations. Students should be familiar with these terms in relation to the topics that they study. The specified terms are listed below under each of the topic headings.

Note that each list includes only the geographical terms stated in the specification. Students are encouraged to use other specialist geographical vocabulary in their answers as well as the terms listed here.

Terms featuring across the specification

Adaptation

Action taken by human to reduce their vulnerability or exposure to impacts.

Causes

Reasons for the form/character of a phenomenon – for example why a process occurs or why a phenomenon displays its characteristic features.

Challenges

Difficult, large-scale problems that require solutions.

Characteristics

The key features and properties of a phenomenon.

Conflicts

Issues over which two or more groups of people disagree.

Consequences

The results of an action, change or process. These may be many and various and can be positive or negative in their geographical impacts.

Contrasting

Where two or more phenomena differ from one another in one or more significant ways.

Distribution

The geographical locations of specified phenomenon/phenomena, most often shown on a map. A distribution may or may not present as a recognisable pattern.

Dynamic equilibrium

A state of balance in a constantly changing natural system, the operation of which attempts to balance inputs with outputs.

Economic

Connected with the economy and therefore related to production, distribution and consumption of goods and services. Conventionally measured in money terms and connected with employment, industry, income and human welfare.

Environmental

Concerned with the environment – water, air and land, and the organisms which occupy it (including humans) and natural resources obtainable from it.

Factors

The underlying causes of a phenomenon and the elements which influence it.

Impacts

The results/outcomes of events, actions or processes on people and the environment. They can be positive or negative.

Implications

What happens or might happen as a result/consequence of specific events, actions or processes.

Issues

Matters which cause concern to people about which there may be differing views, and which may be sources of conflict.

Lifestyle

The way in which people normally live their lives. Lifestyles vary both within and between places.

Management

The design and implementation of policies and strategies to run human systems and influence natural systems in order to minimise or reduce impacts or problems and enhance outcomes. Management involves deliberation, planning and action.

Mitigation

Any actions or measures taken to reduce or offset the adverse impacts or severity of a process or event.

Negative feedback

A cyclical sequence that decreases/diminishes an initial change in a natural system and tends to return the system to a state of equilibrium or balance.

Opportunities

Situations where change might be achievable and a better situation reached.

Patterns

Regularities in the occurrence or distribution of phenomena. Geographically, often shown on a map.

Political

Concerned with the distribution and exercise of power over human affairs, the promotion of different viewpoints and policies, the resolution of any such differences and the consequent decisions and their implementation.

Positive feedback

A cyclical sequence that increases or amplifies an initial change in a natural system.

Problems

Difficulties, risks or issues that worry people and indicate that responses are required.

Process

A sequence of actions, changes or functions that causes a change to take place and bring about a result.

Response

The ways in which people react to events or possible events – some responses are individual, some are collective; some are planned, some are unplanned.

Scale

The area or scope of a phenomenon or focus of study – for example: local, regional, national, international and global.

Social

Connected with people, their quality of life, health, education, lifestyles and welfare.

Strategies

Overarching views and approaches designed to manage a system, problem or issue.

Sustainable

That which is capable of being maintained into the foreseeable future without prejudice to its own continuation and damage to the environment.

System

A set of interrelated components that work together in which there are inputs and outputs of energy and materials. Natural systems tend towards dynamic equilibrium which balances inputs and outputs of energy and materials.

3.1 Physical geography

3.1.1 Section A: Water and carbon cycles

Atmosphere

The mixture of gases that surround the Earth whose main constituents are nitrogen and oxygen.

Biosphere

That portion of the Earth's outer sphere where life forms are found.

Carbon budget

The relative amounts of carbon that are transferred in a given time period between the various stores of carbon.

Carbon cycle

The combination of processes by which carbon is transferred between the main carbon stores.

Carbon sequestration

The long-term storage of carbon. This process occurs naturally in oceans and sediments. It can also refer to the human process of capturing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and storing it.

Cryosphere

The frozen water component of the Earth's outer layers, including ice caps, glaciers and snow cover.

Drainage basin

The area of land from which precipitation is drained by a river and its tributaries.

Evapo-transpiration

The combined processes of evaporation and transpiration transferring water from the Earth's surface to the atmosphere.

Groundwater

The store of water beneath the Earth's surface in soil and rock in pore and fissure space.

Hydrosphere

That portion of the Earth's surface layers contain water, including ice, groundwater, lakes and rivers, oceans and water vapour and droplets in the atmosphere.

Lithosphere

The crust and upper mantle comprising the outermost solid layer of the Earth.

Runoff

Water transferred from river basins to oceans, principally via river channels.

Sere

A stage in the succession of plant and animal communities in an ecosystem. Seres are named after the character of their starting locations; lithosere (starting on bare rock), hydrosere (starting in fresh water), psammosere (starting in sand) and halosere (starting in saline conditions).

Stemflow

Precipitation that is intercepted by vegetation and reaches the ground by flowing down stems, stalks and trunks.

Variation

How far and how frequently a phenomenon differs from the norm or the average.

Water abstraction

The process of taking or extracting water from natural sources for different uses by human populations.

Water balance

The balance, in a drainage basin, between the inputs of water, mainly precipitation, and the outputs of water, mainly run-off, flows of groundwater and evapotranspiration.

Water cycle

The continuous series of processes by which water is transferred between the main water stores.

3.1.2 Section B: Hot desert systems and landscapes

Aeolian

Describes processes related to wind.

Arid

Having little or no precipitation, typically less than 250 mm per annum.

Aridity index

A measure of aridity. The ratio between annual precipitation and mean annual potential evapotranspiration.

Bahada (or Bajada)

Broad slopes of alluvial outwash formed by a merging of alluvial fans.

Barchan

A crescent shaped sand dune formed at right angles to the prevailing winds.

Block disintegration

A form of weathering where rocks are split along joints into blocks. It often occurs due to large daily temperature variations.

Channel flash flooding

Flooding in arid areas after heavy rains when water levels in river channels rise rapidly.

Deflation

Erosion by wind involving the removal of loose materials from flat areas of dry, unconsolidated sediments.

Deflation hollow

A depression in a sandy hot desert environment caused by wind erosion.

Desert

An arid environment experiencing very low levels of precipitation, typically less than 250 mm per annum.

Desert pavement

A surface layer of closely packed or cemented pebbles, gravel or rock fragments from which wind has removed fine particles.

Desertification

The persistent degradation of dryland ecosystems into deserts reducing their biological potential.

Endoreic

A river that terminates in a desert region, usually in a lake.

Ephemeral

A feature such as a river that flows intermittently in a desert region.

Episodic

Infrequent high intensity events – typically a high-intensity rainfall event resulting in flash flooding.

Exfoliation

The peeling or flaking of the outer layer of rocks due to intense heating and cooling, commonly known as onion skin weathering.

Exogenous

Rivers that originate external to the desert in adjacent highlands and more humid environments.

Granular disintegration

A form of weathering where rocks gradually crumble and breakdown into smaller particles.

Inselberg

An isolated outcrop of rock that rises abruptly above a pediment in desert landscapes.

Pediment

An extensive, gently sloping concave surface of bare rock and weathered debris extending beyond a mountain front or surrounding an inselberg.

Playa

An ephemeral lakebed with high levels of salinity typically forming salt flats in hot desert regions.

Sediment budget

The balance between the input and output of sediments in a specified area of a hot desert region.

Sediment cell

The cyclical sediment movement from its source, through various transfers to a sink or output.

Sheet flooding

Unconfined water flow across a landscape surface rather than in a channel.

Sief dune

A common type of sand dune comprised of long ridges of wind-blown sand aligned parallel to the dominant wind direction.

Surface creep

Process by which particles that are too heavy to move by saltation, slide or roll along the surface, principally propelled by wind.

Thermal fracture

A form of weathering caused by the expansion and contraction of the outer surface of rock through rapid and repeated exposure to extreme temperature fluctuations.

Ventifact

Rock shaped by the erosive action of wind-blown sand.

Wadis

A dry valley, channel or ravine, formed by water erosion during occasional intense rainstorms.

Weathering

Sub-aerial processes occurring leading to the disintegration and decomposition of rock and thus influencing the nature of landforms and the character of the landscape.

Yardang

A sharp-crested elongated ridge caused by wind erosion.

Zeugen

A table-shaped area of rock formed when more resistant rock is removed at a slower rate than the surrounding softer rocks.

3.1.3 Section B: Coastal systems and landscapes

Barrier beach

A narrow, elongated sand ridge rising above sea level, parallel to the shore and separated from it by a lagoon.

Cavitation

Collapse of bubbles in waves crashing into and then receding from cliffs and other solid rock features causing energetic pressure waves which break up the rock and enlarge joints and fissures in the rock.

Coastline of emergence

A coastline that has experienced a fall in sea level or tectonic uplift of the land surface.

Coastline of submergence

A coastline that has experienced a rise in sea level or tectonic sinking of the land surface.

Constructive wave

Waves having a long wave length, low wave height and low frequency. The swash tends to be more powerful than the backwash and hence they are associated with the build-up of beach material.

Dalmatian coasts

A submergent landscape of ridges and valleys that runs parallel to the coast and features islands and sea inlets – named after the landscape of Dalmatia on the eastern coastline of the Adriatic Sea.

Destructive wave

Waves having a short wave length, high wave height and high frequency. The backwash tends to be more powerful than the swash and hence they are associated with the removal of beach material.

Eustatic sea level change

A fall or rise in sea level, resulting from changes in the volume of water in the oceans – usually connected with global changes in the volume of ice caps and ice sheets.

Fjord

A glacial trough flooded due to a rise on sea level.

High energy coast

A coastline with high energy waves where erosion processes typically dominate over deposition processes.

Isostatic sea level change

A fall or rise in sea level resulting from the land rising or falling relative to the sea.

Littoral drift (or longshore drift)

The process whereby waves approach the shore at an angle and the difference in the direction of swash and backwash transports material along the coast.

Low energy coast

A coastline with relatively low energy waves where deposition rates typically dominate over erosion rates.

Mudflat

A coastal expanse of mud deposits exposed at low tide but inundated by high tides.

Offshore bar

A ridge of sediment parallel to the coast formed of material eroded by destructive waves and transported offshore.

Raised beach

A former beach occupying a higher level than current sea level and deposited when sea levels were higher than at present for a sustained period of time.

Rias

A non-glaciated river valley submerged following a rise in sea level.

Saltmarsh

An ecosystem formed on tidal mudflats largely comprising of salt-tolerant plants. It is an example of a halosere.

Sediment budget

The balance between the input and output of sediment on a stretch of coast, commonly termed a sediment cell.

Sediment cell

A stretch of coast in which sediments are transferred by various processes between different stores, tending to form a self-contained coastal system. The understanding of sediment cells helps in coastal management.

Tectonic sea level change

A fall or rise in sea level, resulting from changes in land surface levels and configuration associated with tectonic processes.

Tides

The cyclical rise and fall of the level of the sea in response to the gravitational attractions of the moon and sun.

Tombolo

A ridge of beach sediment that has extended to join a former island to the mainland.

Wave quarrying

This involves high energy waves hitting rock faces with sufficient force to enlarge joints and remove particles of rock through vibration.

Weathering

Sub-aerial processes occurring above the waterline leading to the disintegration and decomposition of rock and thus influencing the nature of landforms and the character of the landscape.

3.1.4 Section B: Glacial systems and landscapes

Active layer

The surface layer above permafrost that thaws seasonally in periglacial environments.

Basal sliding

The movement of ice at the base of a warm-based glacier, lubricated by subglacial meltwater.

Blockfield

A surface covered in shattered, frost weathered angular rock debris.

Cold based glacier

A glacier whose base temperature is such that glacial ice is frozen to the bedrock all year round.

Compressional flow

Glacier flow associated with decreasing valley gradient - deceleration of flow leading to thickening of the ice mass and closing of crevasses.

Esker

A ridge of material generally running in the direction of ice and formed by fluvioglacial deposition.

Extensional flow

Glacier flow associated with increasing valley gradient, acceleration leading to thinning of the ice mass and opening of crevasses.

Frost action

The weathering and disintegration of rock caused by repeated fluctuation of temperature around freezing point.

Glacial budget

The balance between the material inputs and outputs of a glacier.

Ice wedge

A narrow, vertical mass of ice that penetrates cracks in the ground from the surface downwards and progressively enlarges them.

Internal deformation

Small scale deformation of ice crystals caused by gravity and the pressure of surrounding ice causing them to slide over each other in a series of parallel planes with an overall downslope component.

Kame

A steep-sided mound on the floor of glaciated landscapes formed by fluviglacial deposition.

Lobe

A semi-circular build-up of soil present on hillslopes in periglacial environments.

Nivation

Erosion of snow-covered surfaces by freeze-thaw action forming hollows in the landscape.

Outwash plain

An extensive, gently sloping area of deposited materials formed in front of a glacier.

Patterned ground

Distinctive patterns of surface material found in periglacial areas and mainly formed by frost action.

Permafrost

Frozen soil and rock that has remained frozen for at least two consecutive years.

Periglacial

Concerning areas processes and landforms adjacent to an icesheet or glacier.

Pingo

A dome-shaped mound formed by the freezing of subsurface water covered by a layer of soil.

Roches moutonnée

An outcrop of rock shaped by glacial erosion, with the upslope side being steep and irregular in form contrasting with the downslope side being relatively smooth and gently sloping.

Solifluction

Movement in summer months of thawed wet soil down gentle slopes under which frozen subsoil acts as a barrier preventing percolation and thus lubricating the overlying soil.

Terracette

Small ridges on a slope formed by soil creep.

Thermokarst

A periglacial landscape consisting of hollows, ponds and hummocks caused by local melting of the permafrost.

Warm based glacier

A glacier where the base temperature fluctuates above melting point during summer months, allowing liquid water to lubricate glacial movement.

Weathering

Sub-aerial processes leading to the disintegration and decomposition of rock and thus influencing the nature of landforms and the character of the landscape.

3.1.5 Section C: Hazards

Acid rain

Acidic precipitation that has negative impacts on natural ecosystems and is associated with air pollution.

Coastal flooding

Dry and low-lying land is submerged by seawater.

Convection currents

The circular motions of upper mantle layers responsible for sea floor spreading and driven by upwelling mantle material.

Gravitational sliding

The movement of tectonic plates as a result of gravity.

Island arc

A linear chain of volcanic island associated with an ocean trench where subduction is taking place.

Lava flow

Molten rock flowing on the surface. Acidic lava tends to be more viscous and solidifies nearer to source than basaltic lava which generally flows over greater distance before solidifying.

Liquefaction

Loosely packed, water-logged sediments at or near the ground surface lose cohesion and behave as a liquid rather than a solid because of shaking during an earthquake.

Lithosphere

The crust and upper mantle that form the outermost solid layers of the Earth.

Magma plume

A rising column of hot rock in the mantle.

Magnitude

The overall strength or 'size' of a hazard.

Mudflow (lahar)

A mix of volcanic ash and rainwater or meltwater that travels downslope.

Multi-hazardous environment

An environment prone to experiencing combinations of seismic, volcanic, atmospheric or wildfire hazard.

Nuées ardentes (Pyroclastic flows)

Dense, fast-moving flows of hot gas (over 800 °C) and rocks that move rapidly downslope at speeds over 700 km/hr. These terms are often used interchangeably but some volcanologists confine the term *nuées ardentes* to flows comprising only of hot gases.

Pyroclastic and ash fallout

Airborne particles of varying sizes that have been ejected from volcanic vents into the atmosphere before falling to the surface.

Ridge push

A driving force for the movement of tectonic plates that occurs at mid-ocean ridges as a result of gravitational forces causing downward movement away from the ridge.

Rift valley

A steep sided valley formed by the downward displacement of crust due to separation of tectonic plates.

Sea-floor spreading

The formation of a new oceanic crust which occurs through the upwelling of magma at mid-ocean ridges and its outward movement from such ridges.

Seismicity

The processes associated with earthquakes in a given area. The frequency and intensity of such processes.

Shockwave

A wave of energy spreading outward from the focus of an earthquake.

Slab pull

A driving force for the movement of tectonic plates occurring at subduction zones as a result of sinking of the crust there.

Storm surge

A temporary, localised rise in sea level as a result of atmospheric pressure changes and storm wind direction.

Tephra

Rock fragments and particles, eg pyroclastic material, ejected during a volcanic eruption and subsequently deposited on the earth's surface.

Tsunami

One or more high magnitude sea wave caused by an earthquake or other offshore underwater disturbance such as slippage of submarine slopes.

Vulcanicity

The processes associated with active volcanoes in a given area. The frequency and intensity of such processes.

Wild fire

An uncontrolled fire occurring in open country or wilderness regions.

3.1.6 Section C: Ecosystems under stress

Adaptations

Features that a species develops within a specific environment to better survive and multiply.

Biodiversity

The range and variety of living organisms within a given area or ecosystem.

Biomass

The total mass of living biological organisms in a given area or ecosystem. It can also be measured per unit area such as grams per square centimetre.

Biome

The region occupied by a large-scale ecosystem such as a Tropical Rainforest.

Biosphere

The part of the Earth's outer sphere where life exists. It includes the hydrosphere and upper lithosphere and extends into the atmosphere.

Climatic climax

The final stage of undisturbed ecological development in a particular area, characterised by a state of ecological equilibrium and hence stability over time.

Ecosystem

A natural system in which organisms interact with each other and their environment.

Fauna

The animal life of a particular region or habitat.

Flora

The plant life of a particular region or habitat.

Hydrosere

A succession of vegetation and associated animal communities in an area of fresh water.

Lithosere

A succession of vegetation and associated animal communities in an area of bare rock.

Net primary production

A measure of the rate at which plants store energy as organic matter in excess of that used in respiration. It is expressed as weight of dry organic matter per square metre per year.

Plagioclimax

An area or habitat where human activity prevents the ecosystem from developing further and reaching climatic climax.

Seral stages

A stage within a sere. (See *Hydrosere* and *Lithosere*.)

Sub-climax

A stage or community in an ecological succession preceding a climax.

Succession

The process by which the mix of species and habitat in an area develops over time progressing to climax.

Topography

The occurrence, arrangement and character of the surface features of an area.

Trophic levels

The position of an organism in the food chain in which energy and materials are successively consumed by other organisms.

3.2 Human geography

3.2.1 Section A: Global systems and global governance

Benefits

The advantages/positive impacts of something (social, economic, environmental, etc).

Geopolitics

How relationships between geographical, economic and political factors impact on political decisions and international relations and therefore affect the use and control of territory and resources.

Global commons

A region, resource or natural property of Earth beyond the exclusive control of individual nation states and requiring common governance and management by the international community.

Global governance

The system and institutions that coordinate the behaviour of international agencies, facilitate cooperation, resolve disputes and improve global decision-making.

Globalisation

The process whereby individual national economies, societies and cultures are increasingly integrated through advances in communication and transport technology, international trade and movement of peoples.

International trade

The exchange of capital, goods and services across international borders. An individual country's exports are outbound to other countries; imports are inbound from other countries.

Labour

A factor of production incorporating human effort and ingenuity into the production, trade and consumption of goods and services.

Latin America

A commonly used term to describe the countries in the Americas found to the south of the continental United States, including Central America, South America and the islands of the Caribbean where the dominant languages derive from Latin (mainly Spanish and Portuguese). Some see the use of this term as problematic due to its use homogenising the region and using a characterisation of language that originates from colonisation.

Non-governmental organisation (NGO)

A non-profit, voluntary citizens group with a common interest in pursuing political goals, organised on a local, national or international scale.

Norms

The shared values, traditions and customs that govern individual and group behaviour in a society.

Sub-Saharan Africa

A term collectively describing countries in Africa located mainly south of the Sahara Desert. The dividing line has origins in colonial ideas of race, separating the predominately Arab states of North Africa, which colonists considered to be more developed from the rest of Africa. This term replaced racist phrases such as 'Black Africa' that were used up until the 1950s.

Transnational corporation (TNC)

Large businesses that operate in several different countries and commonly allocate different productions functions to different types of country – for example in terms of assembly, research and development, and decision taking.

United Nations (UN)

An international organisation founded in 1945 consisting of 193 member states with the aim of maintaining international peace, security and cooperation. It self-defines as “one place where the world’s nations can gather together, discuss common problems and find shared solutions.”

United National Environment Programme (UNEP)

A global authority for the environment with programmes focusing on climate, nature, pollution and sustainable development. UNEP’s mission is “to inspire, inform, and enable nations and people to improve their quality of life without compromising that of future generations.”

3.2.2 Section B: Changing places

Community group

An organised collection of people with shared interests and aims often concerning aspects of public life.

Endogenous factor

These constitute the characteristics of the place itself, including aspects such as climate, topography, land use, the built environment and social and economic characteristics, all of which contribute to peoples' experience of the place and their sense of place.

Exogenous factor

These constitute external agents and processes that affect the character of a place and the experiences of those who live there. They include the activities of central governments, decision taking by business and public agencies, and the operation and effect of the national and international economy.

Experienced place

A place in which a person has actually spent time and directly experienced its characteristics.

Far place

A place that a person has not directly experienced and thus their perception of it is derived from communication and contact with others, often through media such as journals, radio, television, film and so on.

Identities

A combination of physical, psychological and behavioural traits that contribute to a person's self-awareness and how others perceive them. This is in part shaped by where they live and/or their place of birth.

Insider perspective

A viewpoint from an individual who typically lives in a place and therefore has frequent, direct experience of that place, and understands the social and cultural norms.

Media place

A place that has a meaning for a person as a result of exposure to images and information about that place via TV, radio, print, film or online.

Near place

A location that a person perceives as being physically close, whether spatially or through easy access. Often this place is inextricably linked to the place the individual is located.

Outsider perspective

A viewpoint from an individual who is not from a place or who doesn't live there and has little experience of the place. Such individuals may not understand the social norms of the society.

Perspective

A particular attitude or view towards a place. This can be influenced by media representation and/or personal experience.

Place

An area on the Earth's surface which is identified as distinct by the people who live in it or visit it, and which has meaning for them. Such meaning can and may well be shared by different groups of people.

Representation

How a place is portrayed by the views, statements and communications of others. This may be through formal sources such as census data or through informal sources such as media reportage and imagery or verbalisation by others.

3.2.3 Section C: Contemporary urban environments

Counter-urbanisation

The movement of population and economic activity away from large urban centres into smaller urban settlements or rural areas.

Cultural diversity

This existence of a variety of different groups of people with contrasting beliefs, values, norms and behaviour within a society and the area it occupies.

Decentralisation

The movement of population and industry away from the urban centre to outlying areas. This generic process contributes to both suburbanisation and counter-urbanisation.

Deindustrialisation

Long term decline of manufacturing industry leading to significant social and economic change – as seen in the UK in the second half of the 20th century.

Demographic

Relating to the structures and characteristics of populations and the processes they experience eg migration.

Dereliction

The state of buildings, infrastructure and land having been abandoned and become dilapidated through lack of care and maintenance.

Edge city

A modern urban form with a concentration of shops, offices and entertainment, which has emerged as an identifiable urban centre beyond the original city boundary. Edge cities are characteristic of societies and regions with high levels of personal mobility and available space such as in the south-western United States.

Fortress development

An urban area designed around surveillance, protection and exclusion measures, all designed to increase security. Gated communities are an example of a fortress development.

Gentrified area

An area of a city that has been transformed from a run-down state and low property values to the opposite – improved housing occupied by higher income groups leading to changing and increased commercial activity in the area and higher property values.

Liveability

Aspects of urban living which make life more comfortable. It is affected by personal safety, political stability, natural amenities such as green space, cultural life, employment opportunities, political stability or basic safety.

Megacity

A city or urban agglomeration with a population of more than 10 million people.

Particulates

Tiny particles, such as dust or soot, largely given off when fossil fuels such as coal or oil are burned.

Regeneration

The process of urban or rural improvement, which may be economic, social or environmental or any combination thereof.

Social cohesion

The extent to which groups of people are connected, integrated and share common values.

Social segregation

The extent to which groups of people are separated from the larger population and from each other due to factors such as income, wealth, ethnicity, religion, class or age.

Suburbanisation

The outward expansion of existing urban area by the movement of people, services and employment towards the edges of an urban area, facilitated by the development of public transport networks and increased personal mobility.

Sustainable cities

Cities that are able to adapt to, mitigate and promote economic, social and environmental change, meeting the needs of their populations and improving their lives without leaving a burden on future generations.

Sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS)

An approach to managing rainfall by using natural process in the landscape to reduce flooding, control flooding and provide amenities for the community.

Urban heat island effect

The area around and above an urban area that experiences significantly warmer average temperatures than the surrounding rural areas.

Urban policy

Strategies by local or central government to manage the development of urban areas and reduce problems they experience.

Urban resurgence

The movement of population and economic activity back into an area that was previously in decline, reviving the area.

Waste stream

The complete flow of waste from its source through to recovery, recycling or disposal.

World city (global city)

Cities that have influence on a global scale by virtue of their history, size, connectivity and role in the global economic system. The most prominent criterion is the financial status and global commercial power.

3.2.4 Section C: Population and the environment

Agricultural productivity

The ratio of agricultural outputs to agricultural inputs.

Agriculture

The practice of farming, including cultivation of the soil for the growing of crops and the rearing of livestock, to provide food and other products.

Asylum seeker

Someone who has fled their country of origin because of persecution, war or violence and is seeking safety in another country. They have applied for sanctuary, but it is yet to be processed or determined.

Carrying capacity

The maximum population size that an area or environment can sustain indefinitely.

Demographic dividend

The economic growth potential that can result from shifts in a population's age structure, mainly because the percentage of the working-age population increases compared with that of dependants.

Ecological footprint

A measure of the demand humans place on ecosystems; the amount of productive land and water required to produce the resources a population consumes and to absorb the waste it produces.

Economic migrant

A person who has left their country to seek employment in another country in order to improve their living conditions and life chances.

Epidemiological transition

The changing patterns of population age distribution, mortality, fertility and life expectancy associated with the control of infectious diseases and their replacement by chronic disease as leading causes of mortality.

Health

A state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity, as defined by the World Health Organisation (WHO).

Malthusian

This term refers to perspectives on human population related to those of Thomas Malthus who believed that there are inevitably limits to human population growth imposed by “positive checks” on such as famine, disease and conflict.

Morbidity

A term related to and used to describe the incidence of illness and disease within a society.

Mortality

A term related to and used to describe the incidence of death within a society and its different elements. It is commonly measured by death rate and infant mortality rate, case mortality and attack rate.

Neo-Malthusian

This term refers to perspectives on human population which hold that there are environmental limits to population growth, control of which can be achieved by adjustments to lifestyle, consumption and contraception.

Non-communicable disease

A medical type of disease that is non-infectious and non-transmittable between people.

Optimum population

The concept of an ideal number of people that can make the best use of all available resources within an area, ensuring that everyone has an adequate standard of living.

Overpopulation

Too many people for the space, resources and technology available in a given area to support an adequate standard of living.

Refugee

Someone who has been forced to flee their country because of persecution, war or violence and seek safety in another country and are unable to return.

Salinisation

The build-up of salts in soil diminishing its capacity to support thriving.

Vector borne disease

Disease caused by vectors which are organisms that transmit infectious pathogens between humans or from animals to humans. For example bloodsucking insects, such as mosquitoes, which ingest disease-producing microorganisms during a blood meal from an infected host and later transmit it into a new host, after the pathogen has replicated.

Well-being

The state of being comfortable, healthy or happy which is variable between populations, places and time.

Zonal soils

A soil which has experienced the prolonged impact of climate and natural vegetation upon the parent rock.

3.2.5 Section C: Resource security

Exploitation

The development and use of natural resources to the fullest extent or for the most profitable use with possible damage to future production of goods and services.

Exploration

The process of searching an area with the intention of finding and mapping natural resources.

Flow resources

Resources that are renewable and generally derived from continuous natural processes such as wind, moving water, wave energy and sunlight. They are commonly expressed in terms of the annual rates at which they are generated.

Ore minerals

Rocks where the mineral content (usually metal) is of sufficient economic value to justify exploitation.

Primary energy

Energy sources obtained in their raw material or natural form, such as oil, natural gas or running water. In use they are converted into heat, mechanical action or motive power.

Resource frontier

A newly colonised region where resources have been discovered and are brought into production for the first time.

Resource peak

The point in time when the maximum production rate of a resource occurs, after which production declines.

Secondary energy

Forms of energy converted from primary energy sources into usable sources of power such as burning coal or oil in thermal power stations to produce electricity.

Stock resources

Non-renewable resources which are permanently expended in use. Their quantity is expressed in absolute amounts rather than rates.

Virtual water trade

The volume of freshwater used to produce a product, measured at the place where the product was actually made.