

Notes and guidance: Paper 3

Issue evaluation

This guide will be helpful in approaching and delivering the issue evaluation as assessed in GCSE Geography Paper 3: Geographical applications. It covers:

- an overview of the different assessment objectives
- an overview of the scope of the pre-release
- general approaches to delivering the pre-release
- preparing students for the decision making element.

Assessment objectives (AO)

AO requirement	Weighting (Paper 3: Geographical applications)
AO1 Demonstrate knowledge of locations, places, processes, environments and different scales.	0%
AO2 Demonstrate geographical understanding of: concepts and how they are used in relation to places, environments and processes; the interrelationships between places, environments and processes.	3%
AO3 Apply knowledge and understanding to interpret, analyse and evaluate geographical information and issues and to make judgements.	18% (including 10% fieldwork contexts)
AO4 Select, adapt and use a variety of skills and techniques to investigate questions and issues and communicate findings.	9% (including 5% fieldwork contexts)
Paper Weighting	30%

Assessment objectives target mainly AO3 and AO4 with some AO2, showing the importance of students being able to apply knowledge and understanding in different contexts to analyse, interpret, evaluate and make judgements (AO3).

Students should also be able to use a range of geographical sources to investigate issues and questions (AO4).

There are no marks allocated on this paper to AO1.

The pre-release booklet

Purpose

The aim of the issue evaluation is to assess students' critical thinking and problem solving skills and to provide them with the opportunity to demonstrate geographical skills and their application of knowledge. The assessment is synoptic and will give students the opportunity to use their learning across the specification in order to analyse a geographical issue, consider and select proposed solutions and justify choices.

Features

The issue selected will be derived from the core content and will be taken from one or more of the following:

- The challenge of natural hazards
- The living world (with the exception of hot deserts or cold environments)
- Urban issues and challenges
- The changing economic world
- The challenge of resource management (key ideas 'food water and energy are fundamental to human development' and 'the changing demand and provision of resources in the UK create opportunities and challenges').

The pre-release resources may allow extension beyond what is directly covered in the specification. The issue can operate at various scales – eg a local issue that may have broader, global implications and could be based in any area of the world. It may be a proposal for a new development or a major land use change or analysis of an activity which is causing concern. It will usually have a clear human and environmental context.

The issue evaluation is a structured route to enquiry – initially considering the wider aspects of a subject and then focusing on a specific example.

Students are expected to show an understanding of the complexity of decision making in relation to a specific issue.

Resource types

Sources of geographical evidence could include maps at different scales, diagrams, graphs, statistics, photographs, satellite images, sketches, extracts from published materials including management plans and quotes from different interest groups.

Several sources will need to be considered before making an evidenced decision. Sources of information will be varied, forming a range of evidence – academic/ informed, journalistic, reports, surveys of opinions.

Skills (AO4)

Consideration should be given to developing geographical skills. These could include:

- Reference skills – ability to accurately refer to a variety of sources for obtaining information.
- Communication skills – ability to present information in a clear and appropriate way through written communication, maps and diagrams.
- Cartographic, graphical, numerical and statistical skills – ability to use both qualitative and quantitative data.
- Interpretative skills – ability to give meaning to data.
- Evaluative skills – ability to critically analyse and interpret the full range of evidence, viewpoints and options, as well as formulate and justify decisions.
- Problem-solving skills – ability to use information effectively in order to reach logical and evidenced judgements.

Delivering the Issue Evaluation

Plan

As a department, it is worth planning the approach to take when delivering the content to students.

The suggested guided hours of delivery are around 5–6 hours of teaching.

Refer to all three sets of specimen materials to identify ways that the content might be assessed.

Receiving the resource booklet

Once you have received the pre-release information, it is important to consider a plan of approach before passing the materials to students.

Consider the theme of the resource booklet:

- where are the links to the specification?
- what are the links between content from different parts of the course?
- what knowledge can students draw from to aid their understanding?

List the types of resources within the booklet:

- are students familiar with the skills required to access the resources (such as graphs, maps or statistics)?
- are there any particular skills that students need to develop? (refer to skills checklist in the [GCSE Geography specification](#))
- data: are there ways that students can present or manipulate data to aid their understanding?

Identify any areas that students may need more support with:

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- location: are students familiar with the geographical location? eg SAMs 3 – can students locate Bali?
- key words and definitions
- simplifying complex text
- identifying key points from the text
- understanding conflicts of interest and appreciating different viewpoints.

Consider the ability profile of students:

- which students find more complex resources challenging?
- is there a requirement for differentiation?
- are there any areas which students can develop further?

Introducing the resource booklet to students

Possible activities to consider:

- Encourage students to create a glossary of key words about the topic and then carry out some research to define and illustrate each term of theirs.
- Interrogate the resources by identifying key points illustrated by any data or written text.
- Manipulate data and interpret graphs and statistics.
- Identify any patterns shown on maps and describe them effectively. Consider how the information shown on the maps adds to students' understanding of the issue.
- Look for any connections and/or patterns between resources.
- Annotate photographs to highlight key features.
- Produce a table which summarises the different perspectives of interested groups and suggest reasons for their views.
- Produce a table highlighting the advantages and disadvantages of any proposed solutions to the issue.
- Students can carry out basic research into the issue (although this is not essential). Look for suitable videos, images and information to enhance understanding.

Developing AO3 skills

It is important to incorporate an understanding of conflict and decision making within the teaching of the course; the process of understanding conflict, using images, data or considering the views of different people.

There are several areas of the specification where students can develop their decision making skills. Developing these skills with students is essential preparation and will encourage students to use resources effectively in order to make evidences and justifiable decisions.

Useful decision making skills might include

Range

Summarising advantages/disadvantages.

Using evidence

- extended and detailed evidence to support a decision
- referring directly to evidence presented in the booklet (*eg in reference to figure x*).
- **Balance** – using a balanced approach to see all sides of a people-environment issue and accept that all judgements can present problems
- **Counter-argument** – being able to explain why some proposals or ideas may have been rejected.
- **Reach a judgment or decision** – being able to put together a logical case that is linked to evidence.

Embedding decision making throughout the course

Decision making skills should be considered whilst delivering the subject content to students. These skills can be developed with students by selecting areas of the specification where developing an argument can aid students understanding and retention of knowledge. Some areas may give opportunities for the development of problem solving skills.

Examples from Section A – The challenge of natural hazards

- Management of tectonic hazards
- Evidence that weather hazards are becoming more extreme
- Climate change is the result of natural and human factors.

Examples from Section B – The living world

- Growth of tourism in an LIC helps to reduce the development gap
- Strategies used in an attempt to resolve regional differences.

Assessment overview

Assessment objectives are targeted and heavily weighted towards AO3 and AO4 illustrating that the ability to apply knowledge and understanding in different contexts in order to analyse, interpret, evaluate and make judgements is important.

The issue evaluation gives students the opportunity to investigate and use data to reach a judgement about the issue. In doing this they will consider the points of view of the stakeholders involved and make an evaluated judgement.

The assessment will consist of a series of short skills questions **2 or 3 marks**, and more extended written questions based on sources **6 marks**, leading to a decision making exercise **9 marks**.

Within the examination paper there will be an element of synopticity, ie drawing on content from more than one theme.

Section A of the examination should take no longer than 35 to 40 minutes to allow time for the fieldwork questions in Section B. Strategies used in an attempt to resolve regional differences.

The 9 mark question

The final question in Section A will require students to come to a decision based on evidence about an issue expressed within the pre-release booklet. There is no right or wrong answer. It is important that students are able to refer to the resource booklet and use appropriate evidence to justify their decision.

The mark scheme outlines the following for a level 3 response:

Eg Level 3 (Detailed) 7 to 9 marks

AO2 Demonstrates thorough application of knowledge and understanding in evaluating the effectiveness of the chosen project in terms of socio-economic and environmental benefits.

AO3 Applies knowledge and understanding to make a decision based on a wide range of supportive evidence, making detailed links between content from different areas of the course of study.

AO4 Communicates findings with clarity.

Students need to state clearly their main argument and to support this with suitable evidence from the pre-release materials. The points made will be consistently relevant and logically structured, and show an insight into the issue. A range of resource material will be used. The most successful responses will often consider the decision within the context of the whole issue presented in the booklet.

Students should ensure that their decision is supported by a wide range of evidence and fully addresses the command given in the question.

Encouraging students of all abilities

All students need to attempt to answer all questions. The inclusion of SPaG marks on the 9 mark questions mean that these questions have a particularly high value, so students should be encouraged to make sure that these questions are attempted.

The resource booklet can be useful for students who struggle to remember facts and figures; so they will have access to the resources in front of them during the examination.

The aim is to make sure that students are familiar with the materials, including the layout and where different resources are located. Ensure that students are aware of the location of different resources.

Practise identifying key information in order to make decisions, writing conclusive and logical statements and giving evidence to justify decisions.