

Changes to GCSEs in Geography

Information for Parents and Students

Exam board: Edexcel Specification: B

The changes to GCSEs in geography include:

- a choice of topics on which students will be assessed
- removal of the requirement to conduct fieldwork on two occasions
- removal of fieldwork questions assessing students own 'familiar' fieldwork experience
- **These changes will apply to exams in 2022 only.**

The context for exam changes

It is the government's intention that students will sit exams in 2022.

The DfE and Ofqual have consulted on and taken steps to make changes to the exams in 2022 to: recognise the disruption to learning; take account of the public health restrictions that could have had an impact on the way fieldwork could be conducted; make exams less daunting for students in 2022, and provide as familiar exam experience to students as possible.

The changes to GCSE Geography B

• **Paper 1 - Global Geographical Issues will include optionality**

(a choice of topic to reduce the revision load and give students more time to answer questions in the exam)

- Students answer questions on:
- Topic 1: Hazardous Earth

AND EITHER • Topic 2: Development dynamics OR • Topic 3: Challenges of an urbanising world

The examination will still be 1 hour and 30 mins so students have more time to answer questions.

	PAPER 1 2022 ONLY
Assessment	Students will be required to answer questions in Section A Hazardous Earth. Students will answer EITHER Section B Development dynamics OR Section C Challenges of an urbanising world.
Marks	The 4 marks available for SPGST will be moved to the final 8-mark question in Section A Section A will be marked out of 34 (including 4 marks for SPGST), Section B and C will each be marked out of 30. The total paper mark will be 64
Duration	Exam duration will remain the same at 1 hour 30 minutes.
Further advice	Question types, command words and mark tariffs for Paper 1 will remain the same.

Paper 2 - Changes to GCSE B Paper 2

- **Paper 2 Section C will be rewritten.**
- **It will not include questions about students' own fieldwork** – these are removed.
- **Changes to Paper 2 mean that marks have been reduced by 16.** • **The new Paper 2 total mark is 78.**
- **The examination will still be 1 hour and 30 mins so students have more time to answer questions.**
- Students will answer **unfamiliar fieldwork** questions as outlined below:

SECTION C1 Q8 – Coastal Change and Conflict **OR Q9 – River Processes and Pressures At OWS we will do this option**
AND

SECTION C2 **Q10 – Dynamic Urban Areas At OWS we will do this option** OR Q11 – Changing Rural Areas.

Each question will be marked out of 10.

Each question will be based around a context

Physical Fieldwork – Rivers

- For this option, the only things that can be assumed by the Principal Examiner responsible for this paper is that all students have;
 - Knowledge and understanding of one **quantitative** method of measuring river discharge (Spec A) or changes in river channel characteristics (Spec B),
 - Knowledge and understanding of one **qualitative** method of recording landforms that make up the river landscape (Spec A) or collecting data on flood risk (Spec B),
 - **Secondary source** – an understanding of Environmental Agency flood risk maps (both Specs).
- So, exam questions cannot focus on data collection methods that may not have been part of the fieldwork design.

Human Fieldwork – Urban

- For this option, the only things that can be assumed by the Principal Examiner responsible for this paper is that all students have;
 - Knowledge and understanding of one **quantitative** method of collecting data on land use function (Spec A) or environmental quality (Spec B),
 - Knowledge and understanding of one **qualitative** method of collecting data on the quality of the urban environment (Spec A) and perceptions of quality of life (Spec B),
 - **Secondary source** An understanding of Census data.
- So, exam questions cannot focus on data collection methods that may not have been part of the fieldwork design.

The fieldwork process

Stage in the enquiry process	Description
1	Understanding of the kinds of question capable of being investigated through fieldwork and an understanding of the geographical enquiry processes appropriate to investigate them.
2	Understanding of the range of techniques and methods used in fieldwork, including observation and different kinds of measurement.
3	Processing and presenting fieldwork data in various ways, including maps, GIS, graphs and diagrams (hand-drawn and computer-generated).
4	Analysing and explaining data collected in the field, using knowledge of relevant geographical case studies and theories.
5	Drawing evidenced conclusions and summaries from fieldwork transcripts and data.
6	Reflecting critically on fieldwork data, methods used, conclusions drawn and knowledge gained.

- These six stages form the basis of fieldwork enquiry.
- They also form the specification by which examiners set questions on both familiar and unfamiliar fieldwork.