

**Geography
GCSE****Introduction****Aims**

The main aims of the Introduction are to describe:

- GCSE and its general aims
- the **syllabus content** of GCSE and how it relates to the general **structure** of your course
- the papers that you will sit in your examination

GCSE

The General Certificate of Secondary Education is an examination which replaced the 'O' level and CSE examinations in the late 1980's. It is designed to test all students, and aims to assess not only what you know, but how you use what is known.

So, in the course of your study for the examination you will have to acquire certain skills, as well as knowledge and understanding. Because there is this emphasis on skills, you will find that this course has many "activity" sections. These should be completed in each case before you move on to the next part of the lesson.



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The Arrangement of Lessons

Module One: Geographical Skills: Mapwork

Lesson No. Title

- 1 Map References
- 2 Height and Relief Features
- 3 Cross-Sections
- 4 Rivers and Valleys
- 5 Glaciation; Coastlines
- 6 Communications and Settlement
- 7 Vegetation and Land Use
- 8 Interpretating Photographs
- 9 **Tutor-marked Assignment A**
- 10 Simplified Maps
- 11 The Interpretation of Data
- 12 The Interpretation of Data (2)
- 13 **Tutor-marked Assignment B**

Module Two: Population and Settlement

- 14 Developed and Less Developed Countries
- 15 World Population Distribution
- 16 World Population Growth
- 17 Settlement Geography
- 18 Urban Growth
- 19 Techniques for the Geographical Enquiry
- 20 **Tutor-marked Assignment C**

Module Three: Resources and Economic Activities

- 21 Agriculture (1)
- 22 Agriculture (2)
- 23 Industry
- 24 Stages of Economic Development
- 25 **Tutor-marked Assignment D**

Module Four: Physical Environment and Human Activities

- 26 The Structure of the Earth
- 27 Weathering and Rivers
- 28 Glaciated Regions and Coastlines
- 29 **Tutor-marked Assignment E**
- 30 Meteorology and Man
- 31 Rain and Snow
- 32 Ecosystems

- 33** The Water Supply and Geographical Techniques for Fieldwork
34 **Tutor-marked Assignment F**

Module Five: Development

- 35** Contrasts in Development
36 Environment and Development
37 Contrasts in Agriculture and Industry
38 The Interdependence of Nations
39 **Tutor-marked Assignment G**

Module Six: Course Assessment

- 40** Revision of the Whole Course
41 **Examination Paper 1**
42 **Examination Paper 2**
43 **Examination Paper 3**

The Syllabus Content and General Structure of the Course

This course prepares you for the 'A' syllabus of the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance — syllabus 3031. This syllabus requires candidates to take two written exam papers and to produce coursework in the form of one (or more) geographical enquiries.

You will see that the AQA syllabus is divided into **Skills** and **Units of Study**, with the skills that you have learnt coming into these Units.

Your course is therefore divided into two major sections which are:

- Section A: Geographical Skills
- Section B: Human and Physical Geography (this is subdivided into 5 Units of Study).

Skills

The main skills that you will learn are map reading and interpretation, together with the interpretation of geographical data (i.e. facts). You will also learn how to construct a variety of graphs and diagrams. Having learnt these skills you will be prepared to tackle Paper 1 of AQA which is devoted mainly to skills. In addition, these skills will form the basis of many of the activities in the Human and Physical Geography section of the course.

Human and Physical Geography

This section of your course is divided into four major units for study which are:

- A. Population and Settlement**
- B. Resources and Economic Activities**
- C. Physical and Human Activities**
- D. Development**

Your Examination

All Geography GCSE syllabuses are linked to the National Curriculum for Geography but most examination boards offer more than one different syllabus. Some boards offer as many as five syllabuses. This course is written around the AQA syllabus A and is not directly suitable for any other GCSE Geography syllabus, although it will have some elements in common with a number of other syllabuses.

The exams are graded from A* to G. There are two levels of entry to the exam. Although the examination structure is the same for each, the grades awarded are different. Entering at Foundation Level (3031F) allows you to achieve grades C-G. Entering at Higher Level (3031H) allows you to achieve grades A*-D. A 'pass' at GCSE is generally considered to be a C or above.

The Assessment and Qualifications Alliance Syllabus

AQA candidates will be taking the following papers:

Paper 1 (1 hour 45 minutes) (40% of marks)

Section A: Geographical Skills

This section is based on an Ordnance Survey map extract, photographs, sketch maps, cross-sections, satellite images and other stimulus material. These questions will be stepped in difficulty. This means that the easiest questions (e.g. one word answers) come first, whereas the more difficult questions

may involve continuous prose answers. This section will always have a UK context and is worth 24 marks.

Section B: Candidates answer three questions from:

1. Tectonic Activity
2. Rocks and Landscapes
3. River Landscapes
4. Glacial Landscapes
5. Coastal Landscapes
6. Weather and Climate
7. Ecosystems

All these topics are covered (to varying degrees) in the course and you will be able to choose the ones you feel most comfortable with. Each question is worth 15 marks.

Paper 2 (1 hour 30 minutes) (35% of marks)

Paper 2 has three sections, each with two resource-based structured questions. Candidates answer three questions, one from each of the sections below. Each question is worth 25 marks.

- A.** A question on **Population**
A question on **Settlement**
- B.** A question on **Agriculture**
A question on **Industry**
- C.** A question on **Managing Resources**
A question on **Development**

All of these topics are covered in this course but for tactical reasons you might make a decision to specialise in agriculture rather than industry, for example. It's up to you and your tutor. For Section C, you would be well advised to aim for Development as there is rather more in the course on this than on Managing Resources.

Paper 3 Coursework (25% of marks)

Coursework of approximately 2500 words based on a fieldwork investigation at a local/small scale. The last part of this Introduction is concerned with the geographical investigation and you should also consult your syllabus if you are unclear on anything.

Required Textbooks

The course has been written specifically with the demands of this GCSE in mind and no supporting textbook is required for you to be able to follow the course successfully. The course has the advantage that it covers all important aspects of the AQA syllabus.

Because there are so many different Geography GCSE syllabuses, it is not easy to find a textbook which covers all aspects of this syllabus. Some will cover one area well and others another. Although it is no longer in print, the following is a very good general text:

Examining GCSE Geography, R. Bateman & N. Rowles (Stanley Thornes; ISBN 0-7487-1015-9)

You may be able to find this book in your local library. A number of exercises or activities are taken from the book and other activities have been constructed based on maps or information given in the book. Thanks are due to Stanley Thornes and to Dick Bateman and Nick Rowles for permission to incorporate sections of the textbook in this course. Other texts by these authors are highly recommended as supplementary reading.

More recent publications that will be easier to obtain are:

- *Key Geography for GCSE* (Books 1 and 2), David Waugh and Tony Bushell (Nelson Thornes; ISBN 0748736034 (Book 1) and 0748736492 (Book 2)).
- *The New Wider World*, David Waugh (Nelson Thornes; ISBN 0174343140)
- *Longman Geography GCSE*, Ann Bowen, Roger Clay, John Pallister and Olly Phillipson (Longman; ISBN 0582293939)

This book is based on the SEG 2002 syllabus that AQA has replaced. The materials covered, however, are very similar, and it includes case studies and photographs that can usefully supplement the information contained within this course. One easy way to buy supporting texts is through the OOL website (www.ool.co.uk).

You will also need a good up-to-date world atlas, preferably one with extended sections covering UK geography. A good atlas will serve you well not just for this course but in many other ways as well.

Some of the activities in the lessons may require you to use your initiative in hunting out information either in your atlas

or (via your local library) in other textbooks. Such initiative is one of the skills you are supposed to be learning and the more books you refer to the better your work is likely to be.

The Method of Study

The OOL course is contained in two main Sections. They are **Geographical Skills** and **Physical and Human Geography**. The latter Section is divided into the four major Course Units.

Each Section and Course Unit is divided into a number of lessons with specific aims. These aims are mainly achieved through **activities** in which much of your learning is gained by doing specific tasks in conjunction with textbooks prescribed in the Introduction.

Self-assessment is part of the learning process so when you have completed each activity you check your results against the model answers before you proceed to the next stage. It is most important that you do not proceed to the next lesson till you have mastered and understood all the activities of a lesson. Answers to a lesson's activities, and to its self-assessment tests, are included **at the end of the lesson**.

Self-Assessment Tests follow some of the lessons. They should be completed under test conditions and then checked against the model answers. They are *not* to be sent to your Tutor.

Tutor-marked Assignments follow the completion of a major theme within a Section. They are more searching and are designed to test skills, knowledge and understanding at various levels of ability and over a wider area of the syllabus. Again, these tests must be completed under strict test conditions. When completed, they should be **sent to your Tutor** who will then assess them before they are returned to you with comments.

The final part of the learning and assessment process comes in Section C at the end of the Course when you answer three **Examination Papers**. Since these papers cover the whole course it is essential that you allow a period of revision beforehand. Again, the answers to these papers must be sent to your Tutor for his detailed assessment and final comments.

It is your responsibility to plan out a lesson timetable bearing in mind the date of your actual examination. You should therefore aim to complete the course at least a month before the examination. This will allow time for revision and for sorting out any aspects of the syllabus about which you are not sure.

Coursework: the Geographical Enquiry

Coursework is an important part of the Geography syllabus and needs to be borne in mind right from the beginning of the course. Guidance for the practical skills and techniques required for coursework will be found particularly in Lessons 19 and 33 but almost every part of the course should prove useful. But do not hesitate to ask for your tutor's advice at this crucial point in your studies.

The stipulated Geographical Enquiry provides the opportunity for investigation within a small area and **must** involve the consideration of an argument or problem or an assertion to be tested. First-hand data collection (e.g. a questionnaire, stream survey or pedestrian count), recording and use should take place within the investigation.

Differentiation is achieved by each candidate showing what "he or she knows, understands and can do!". As a guide, the Enquiry should aim to be between 2,000 and 2,500 words and must include relevant illustrations.

Coursework and External Candidates

Who marks your coursework? You will need to talk to your tutor about this but it is *usually* your tutor (or a colleague).

However, many of the students following this course will qualify as "external" (or "private") candidates. This category is for open learners and distance learners who are not taking part in regular classes and who are *not* taking the examination at a school or college where they are enrolled as a student. If this applies to you, you can enter as an external/private candidate and **your coursework will be marked directly by the board.**

You should contact AQA as soon as possible after starting this course, registering your intention to take the exam as an external candidate. AQA will be able to advise you about local centres where it will be possible to sit the written papers. You will also be told whether you need to send your coursework

direct to AQA or whether you should send it via the exam centre.

Your tutor will be expected to sign to the effect that it is all your own work but will not actually mark it. This is called “authentication”.

Important: if you delay in contacting AQA and wait until you are near the end of your course, you may find it is not possible to enter in the year of your choice. Certainly, you should allow at least six months before your examination.

Everyone who does *not* qualify as an external/private candidate has coursework supervised and marked by a tutor at the centre where they are making their examination entry. Ask your tutor if you are not sure which category you fall in. In all other respects, the requirements for external candidates are the same as for ordinary school-based candidates.

The Skills You Need for Coursework

Coursework counts for 25% of the total marks for the examination. Your syllabus provides many pages of details of how the coursework should be tackled and presented. You will be assessed according to five clearly defined criteria:

- applied understanding (of what you aim to do)
- methodology (how you go about it)
- data presentation
- data interpretation
- evaluation (how successful your study was)

Valuable guidance is to be found on each of these aspects. Take particular note of the last of these requirements and include a specific section called “Limitations”. Your survey is unlikely to provide absolutely conclusive proof of any proposition and you should always be aware of the circumstances in which you might have reached a different result, e.g. “had I asked more people ... “ or “had conditions been different”. Mention what went right as well as what went wrong.

You would be well advised to follow the above sequence of investigation and presentation exactly and show, through your section headings, etc, that you are aware of the various criteria that will be used in marking you.

Every aspect of your study will play a part in preparing you for fieldwork/ coursework but two lessons are particularly crucial.

Lessons 19 and 33 focus on the special skills which are required to plan a suitable project, carry out the fieldwork and present your results satisfactorily. Depending on your timetable for study and the amount of time you have left before your coursework deadline, you would be well-advised to tackle your project between your completion of Lesson 33 and the end of the course. Do not underestimate the time it will take to plan, implement and report a project satisfactorily. Your tutor should be able to help you plan a suitable timetable.

How much can your Tutor help?

There are limits to the amount of help that you can expect to receive from your tutor. Records of direct assistance must be noted on the reverse of the candidate assessment sheet.

Selection: tutors can advise candidates on their choice of topic. Lesson 19 also contains clear advice on what would or would not constitute a suitable project. Although they cannot dictate a title, your tutor can help you to select your coursework task.

Briefing: candidates may be advised on the focus of the investigation and the selection of source materials (such as statistics, visits, persons to interview, the techniques to be used in the field and the production of their reports).

Problems: some help may be given to get you past specific obstacles.

Your tutor is not permitted to help you turn a rough draft into a perfect finished article, otherwise they cannot sign to declare that the piece is all your own work. After initial advice, and once your investigation is under way, you are largely on your own to carry out the work. However, your tutor is still there to help and advise if you really need it, although they do have to declare it if they give specific assistance for a specific problem.

AQA Guidance on Coursework

Further advice and exemplar material is available in a syllabus support booklet, available from the AQA, Publications Department.

Presentation

Coursework should be completed and compiled into one folder. This should be presented on A4 paper (any larger material must be folded to this size). The sheets of each candidate's work must be numbered and secured together and must be identified with the centre and candidate number.

Investigations may be handwritten or prepared using information technology (IT). The use of IT is encouraged, although candidates will not gain any extra credit simply for its use. The quality of presentation and range of skills used, regardless of the methods employed, will be assessed.

Candidates should be advised that the total coursework should be between 2000-2500 words. Candidates exceeding this by more than 500 words should edit their coursework down!

Teachers are expected to provide the following assistance to every candidate (advisory moderators are available to assist with coursework enquiries such as plans for coursework, enquiries about teacher assistance and the presentation of the projects).

Planning

Teachers are asked to advise candidates on their choice(s) of topic to ensure that each candidate is able to show "what he or she understands and can do".

Where work is undertaken within a group, or is teacher initiated, it is important that candidates are able to show their own initiative and that their own work is readily identifiable. Centres should select tasks appropriate to the abilities of their candidates. The design of the tasks should give all candidates the opportunity to achieve the level of marks commensurate with their ability.

Candidates may be advised on the selection of source materials (such as statistics, visits, persons to interview, techniques to be used in the field and the production of their reports).

Problems Encountered and Relevancy

It is recognised that some candidates may require more assistance than others. Where this is the case, centres should acknowledge this on the Candidate Assessment Sheet (CAS) and mark the coursework accordingly.

An exemplar guidance leaflet (included in the syllabus support booklet) about “getting started” has been written for candidates to use.

The candidate and his/her teacher must sign the authentication statements on the front of the CAS. Sufficient work has to take place under direct supervision to allow the teacher to authenticate each candidate’s work with confidence.

Results of Your Examination: Grade Descriptions

The system of grading seems to change slightly each year so you will need to check the syllabus for the year you are aiming for. Because too many students were getting a grade A, a new grade called A* (“A starred”) has been introduced which is better than a grade A.

It is generally agreed that a grade C at GCSE is equivalent to a pass in the old “O” level examination and the minimum if you want to go on to ‘A’ level.

Studying the Syllabus

You should be sure to acquire your own copy of the syllabus, either via the AQA Publications Dept or from the website www.aqa.org.uk.

The syllabus can be purchased from

Publications,
AQA, Aldon House,
39, Heald Grove,
Rusholme,
Manchester
M14 4NA (tel: 0161-953-1170)

or downloaded from www.aqa.org.uk/qual/pdf/AQA3031WSP.pdf.

We advise that you obtain a copy of the syllabus so that you can assess which topics you have covered in the most detail and which ones you will feel happiest about in the exam. AQA can also provide advice booklets on your course, including ‘Supplementary Guidance for Private Candidates’. As you approach the examination, it will also be helpful to purchase and tackle past papers from AQA.

Using the Internet

All students would benefit from access to the Internet. You will find a wealth of information on all the topics in your course. As well as the AQA website (www.aqa.org.uk), you should get into the habit of checking the Oxford Open Learning site (www.ool.co.uk) where you may find news, additional resources and interactive features as time goes by. If you have not already done so, you may register for your free copy of *How to Study at Home*, our 200-page guide to home learning, or enrol on further courses. Put it on your Favourites list now!

Footnote

Throughout the course we will be referring to ELDCs (Economically Less Developed Countries) and EMDCs (Economically More Developed Countries). You may find that in the exam and in the syllabus these are referred to slightly differently, as LEDCs and MEDCs. The letters still mean exactly the same thing, they are just in a slightly different order.

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