



Practical strategies for succeeding in geography exams

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**Geographical Association Bristol Branch
Wednesday 25 March 2015 4.30 - 6.30pm**

Practical strategies for succeeding in geography exams

4:30 Introduction and big picture

4:35 Take command

4:50 Terminology is key

5:10 Planning answers/essays

5:15 Introductions – what's my essay title

5:30 Short break and refreshments

*5:40 Structure, Introductions, Paragraphs,
Conclusions – PEEL*

Putting it all together - Speaking or 3D essay

6:00 Revision tip 1 Ropey revision

6:10 Revision tip 2 Hexagons: making connections

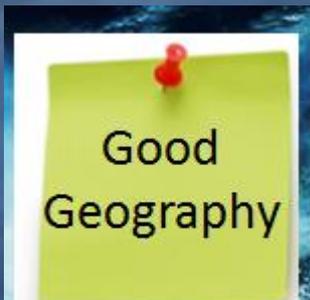
6:25 Final remarks and close



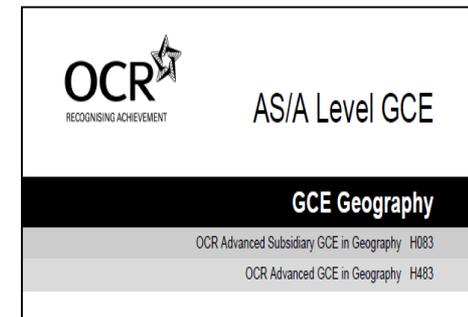
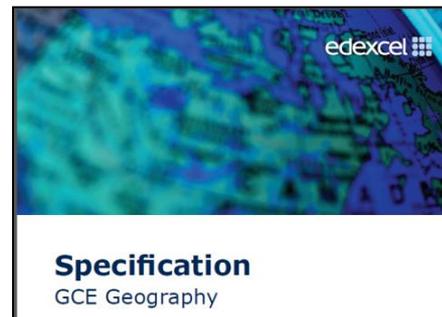
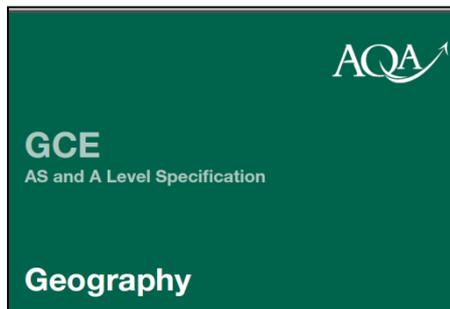
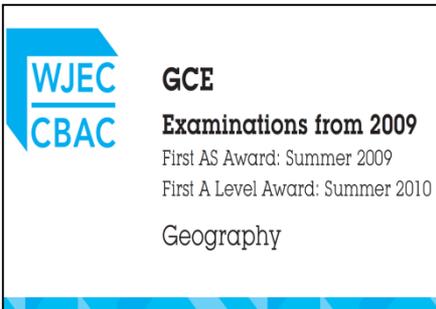
Revision
tips and
activities



Better
written
responses



Good
Geography



G1 : Changing Physical Environments (1. climate change, 2. **tectonic** and hydrological change)

G2 : Changing Human Environments (1. population change, 2. **settlement change**)

G3 : Contemporary Themes and Research in Geography
(A)1 from Desert **and** Tundra; Glacial **or** Coastal; **or** Climatic hazards.
1 from Development; Globalisation; **either** India **or** China
(B) Individual research (10 themes)

G4 : Sustainability
Pre-release on one of Food , Water, Energy **Cities**,

Unit 1 Physical and Human Geography
Rivers plus 1of (Cold env. ; Coasts; **Hot desert**)

Population plus 1 of (Food supply issues; Energy issues
Health issues)

Unit 2 Geographical Skills

Unit 3 Contemporary Geographical Issues
Plate tectonics; Weather and climate; Ecosystems
World cities; **Development and globalisation**

Contemporary conflicts

Unit 4 Fieldwork or Issue Evaluation

Unit 1: Global Challenges
1: World at Risk
2: Going Global

Unit 2: Geographical Investigations
1: **Extreme Weather**
2: Crowded Coasts
3: **Unequal Spaces**
4: Rebranding Places

Unit 3: Contested Planet
1: Energy Security; 2: Water Conflicts; 3: Biodiversity Under Threat; 4: Superpower Geographies; 5: Bridging the Development Gap; 6: The Technological Fix?

Unit 4: Geographical Research

AS Managing Physical Environments (Rivers, Coasts, Cold env.;**Hot/semi-arid**)

AS Managing Change in Human Environments (urban change, rural change, energy, tourism).

A2 Global Issues

A. Environmental Issues (**earth hazards**, ecosystems, climatic hazards)

B. Economic Issues (**population**, **globalization**, development)

A2 Geographical Skills

4:30 Introduction and big picture



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written
responses

Take command

describe , analyse, explain, account for..,
state, identify, to what extent, discuss,
compare, contrast, examine, explain in detail,
using a named example, distinguish between,
outline the reasons for, assess, evaluate,
annotate, illustrate, comment on, give reasons
for..

Analyse	Break down the content of a topic, or issue, into its constituent elements in order to provide an in-depth account and convey an understanding of it.
Annotate	Add to a diagram, image or graphic a number of words that describe and/or explain features, rather than just identify them (which is labelling).
Assess	Consider several options or arguments and weigh them up so as to come to a conclusion about their effectiveness or validity.
Compare	Describe the similarities and differences of at least two phenomena.
Contrast	Point out the differences between at least two phenomena.
Comment on	Make a statement that arises from a factual point made – add a view, or an opinion, or an interpretation. In data/stimulus response questions, examine the stimulus material provided and then make statements about the material and its content that are relevant, appropriate and geographical, but not directly evident. Candidates are being invited to ‘think like a geographer’.
Critically	Often occurs before ‘Assess’ or ‘Evaluate’ and invites an examination of an issue from the point of view of a critic with a particular focus on the strengths and weaknesses of the points of view being expressed.
Define., What is meant by..	State the precise meaning of an idea or concept. There is usually a low tariff of marks for this.
Describe	Give an account in words of a phenomenon which may be an entity, an event, a feature, a pattern, a distribution or a process. For example, if describing a landform say what it looks like, give some indication of size or scale, what it is made of, and where it is in relation to something else (field relationship).
Discuss	Set out both sides of an argument (for and against), and come to a conclusion. There should be some evidence of balance, though not necessarily of equal weighting.

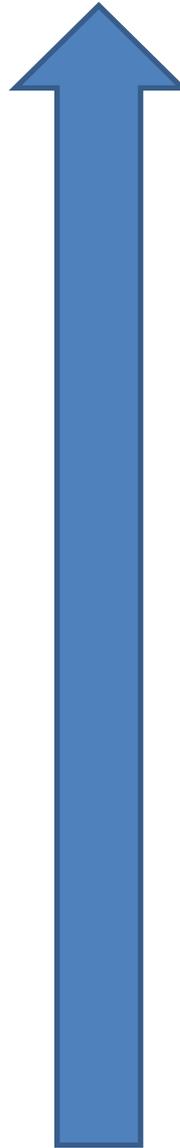
Evaluate	Consider several options or arguments and come to a conclusion about their importance/success/worth.
Examine	Consider carefully and provide a detailed account of the indicated topic.

Explain..., Why..., Suggest reasons for...	Set out the causes of a phenomenon and/or the factors which influence its form/nature. This usually requires an understanding of processes. Explanation is a higher-level skill than description and this is often reflected in its greater mark weighting.
Justify (at AS)	Give reasons for the validity of a view or idea or why some action should be undertaken. This might reasonably involve discussing and discounting alternative views or actions.
Justify (at A2)	Give reasons for the validity of a view or idea or why some action should be undertaken. This might reasonably involve discussing and discounting alternative views or actions. At A2 level each of the views present or options available will have positives and negatives. For the outcome(s) chosen, the positives outweigh the negatives. Candidates should be able to explain all of this review process.
Outline..., Summarise...	Provide a brief account of relevant information.
To what extent ...	Form and express a view as to the merit or validity of a view or statement after examining the evidence available and/or different sides of an argument.

Discuss
Justify To what extent
(Critically) Evaluate
(Critically) Assess
Analyse

Comment on
Explain
Contrast and Compare
Annotate
Examine
Outline

Describe
Label
Define..,
What is meant by..



Compare and contrast the formation of the river features at X and Y?

Explain how a meander forms?

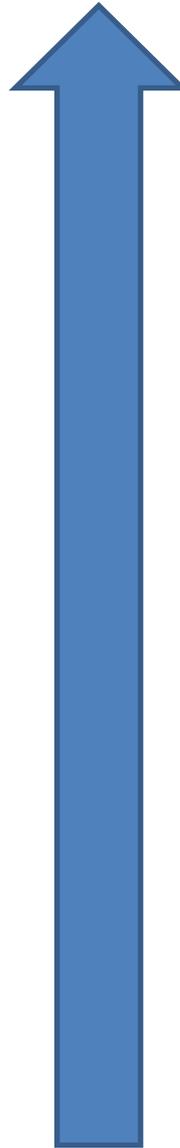
Describe a meander?

What is a meander?

Discuss
Justify To what extent
(Critically) Evaluate
(Critically) Assess
Analyse

Comment on
Explain
Contrast and Compare
Annotate
Examine
Outline

Describe
Label
Define..,
What is meant by..



Discuss how rivers can be managed in sustainable way?

Evaluate the river management strategy being used at location X?

Assess the effectiveness of dams as a flood control measure?

Examiner comment:

One of the major pitfalls that face candidates in any examination is their difficulty in interpreting the demands of the questions asked of them.

Examiners always try to set questions which are clear in what they ask for and which can be answered by everyone who has followed the course and has prepared adequately for the examination.

Correct interpretation of the Command Words of a question is, therefore, very important.

Figure 5.



4:35 Take command

Describe the vegetation shown in **Figure 5**.

(4 marks)

Explain how vegetation in hot deserts is adapted to the climate.

(7 marks)

‘The Sahel can be used sustainably, if carefully managed.’ **Discuss** this statement. (15 marks)

AS Geography AQA 2013

Figure 5.



There are **two types** of vegetation– cover is **sporadic**.

1, One type is a **cactus (Saguaro)**

....stands above the other vegetation.

.... mainly one large stem, with limited branches.

dark green in colour, but covered in white needles.

2. The smaller shrubs (**creosote bushes**) have many branches ..quite thin.

The leaves are plentiful, small and light green

Allow up to 3 on either vegetation type, up to 2 for naming species shown. 4×1
AQA Mark Scheme June 2013)



Command word



Content/ context/ terminology

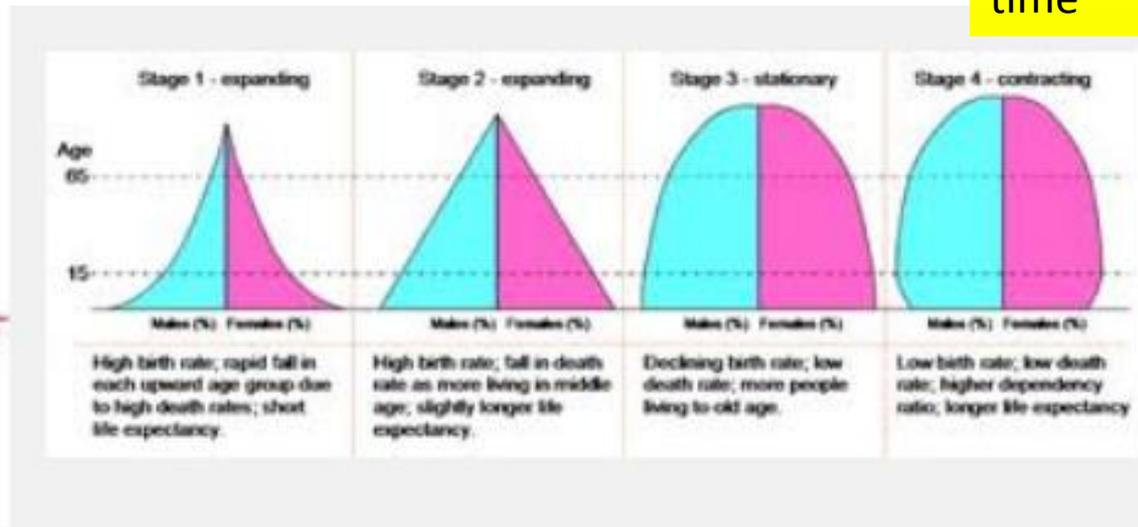
Terminology is key

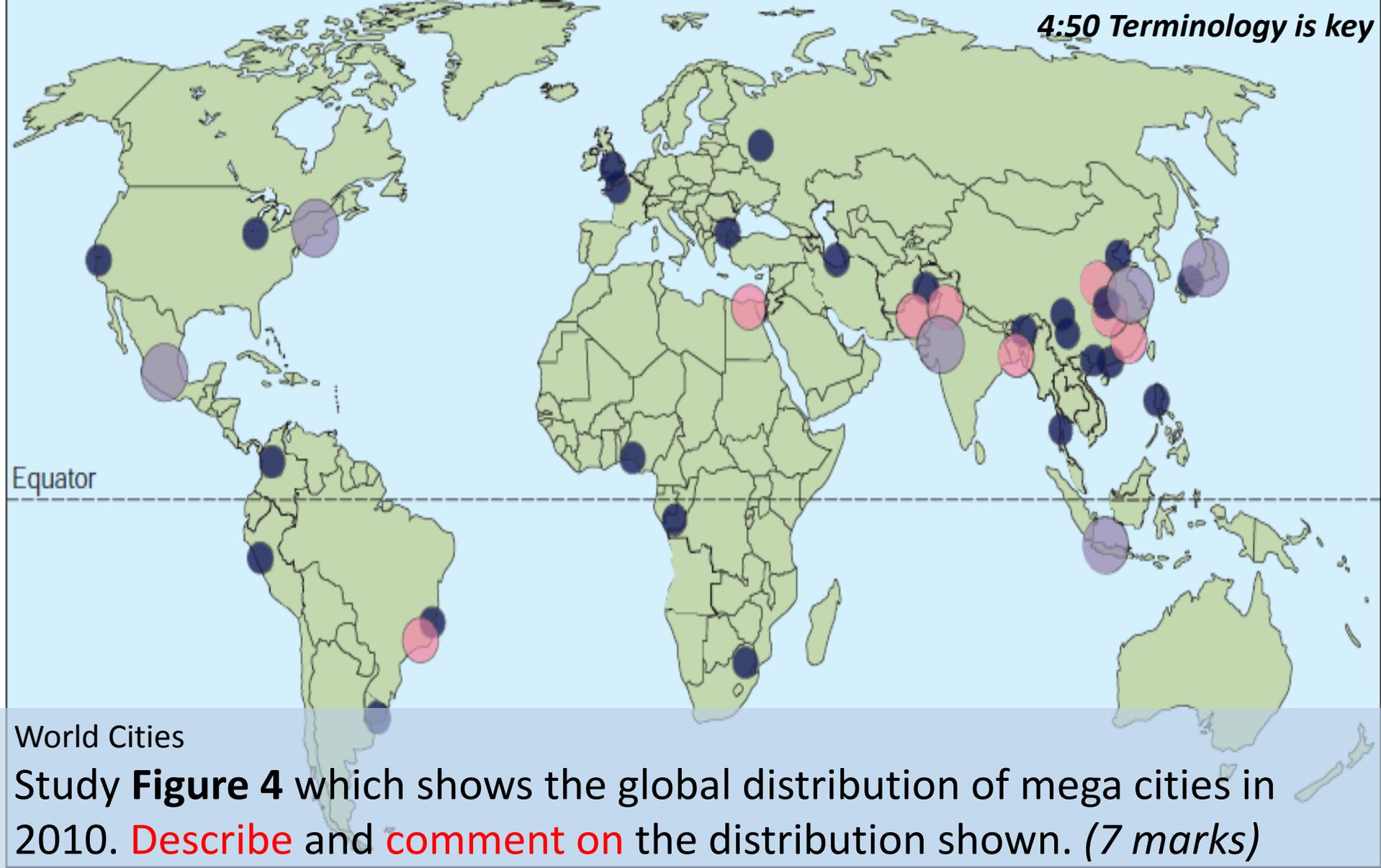
Case studies

With reference to **named examples**, **discuss** the geographical issues arising from changing population structure (15 marks)

Social
Economic
Environmental
Political

Variations within a country or region over time





Key

Mega city size: ● 10 – 14.99 million ● 15 – 20 million ● Over 20 million



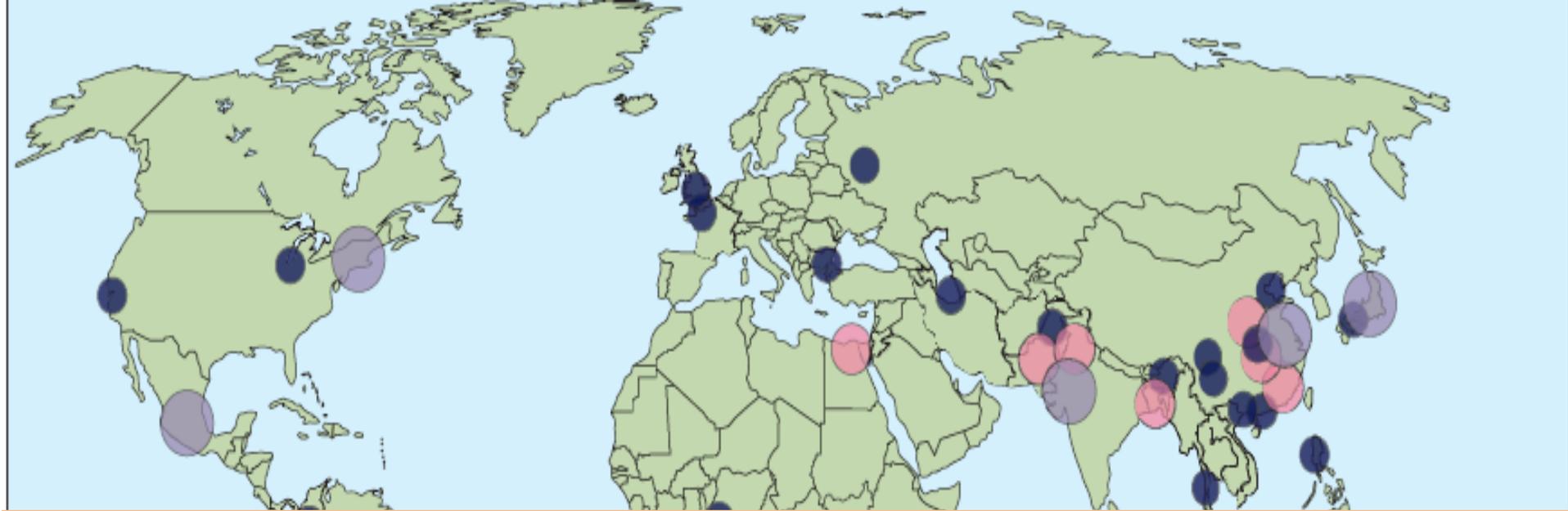
Better
written
responses

Take command

Stimulus response questions

Examiner comment: need to study and **use** a stimulus on your answers. The command '**comment on**' requires [you] to make a geographical inference based ... on something evident in the Figure. In direct terms, the Figure that is being provided should be referred to repeatedly in the answers to the questions set on that stimulus; and in simple terms evidence from the Figure should be given to support a point being made.

AQA Geog 3 (2013, p.3)



Examiner comment:

“... the world map of Figure 4 - Question 10 - presented a certain issue, namely the inability to describe a ‘distribution’ as opposed to location.” AQA Geog 3 (2013, p. 3)

“provide an overview, rather than ‘blow by blow’ account”

“Students need to make positive statements when describing distributions.” AQA Geog 3 (2013, p.7)

Background

AO2 - 5
AO3 - 2

Any definition of the term mega city is arbitrary; however, the most widely used definition is 'an urban agglomeration of 10 million people or more' (UN). 'Meta cities' have more than 20 million inhabitants.

Notes for answers

Figure 4 shows that the majority of such cities can be found in the developing world – with only 9 or 10 in total in Japan, Europe and North America. There are similar numbers of mega cities in Africa as in each of Europe and North America.

When looking at the largest mega cities, the distinction is more stark – there are only two with 15+ million outside the developing world – New York, Tokyo. China and India dominate these. Rapid industrialisation in these countries has stimulated urban growth. Urbanisation in the developing world, particularly since 1970, has spawned the rapid growth of mega cities. The driving forces behind urbanisation have been massive rural-urban migration and natural increase rates that are higher in urban than rural areas.

Mark scheme**Level 1 (1-4 marks) (mid-point 3)**

Simple statements of description. Limited or basic statements of commentary on the distribution. If no description given, then credit one good comment within this level.

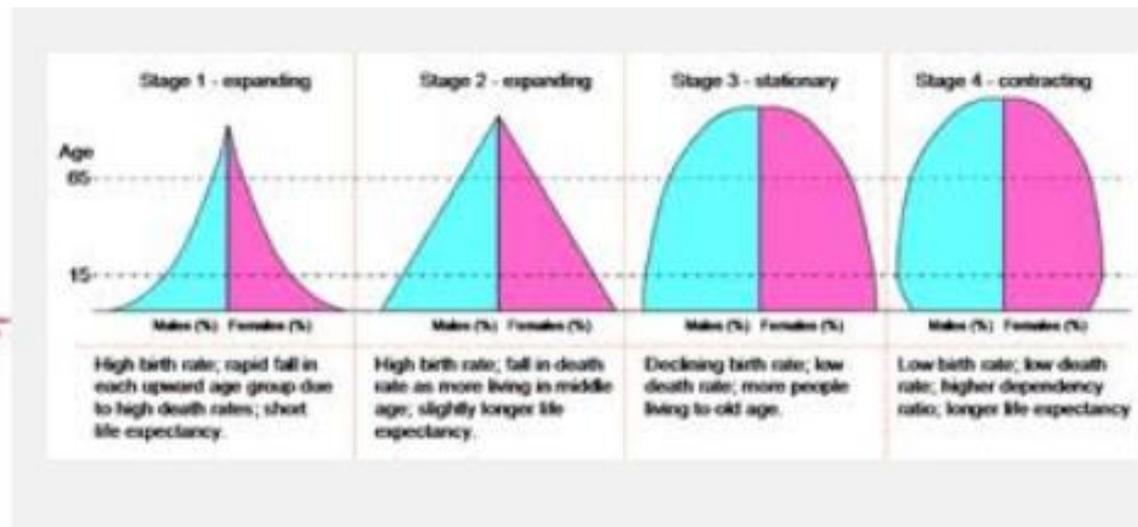
Level 2 (5-7 marks) (mid-point 6)

More sophisticated description with appropriate commentary on the distribution. Award this level for each correctly attributed statement of commentary.

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Plan, don't over plan

With reference to named examples , discuss the geographical issues arising from changing population structure (15 marks)



With reference to named examples, discuss the geographical issues arising from changing population structure (15 marks)

Analysis, give different points of view, argue the case, support your points

Population Increasing/decreasing – natural increase (+/-migration in/out)

(++) (+-) (- -) (- +)

Social-cultural ++/--

Economic ++/--

Environmental ++/--

CS1 – (DRC)

Democratic Republic Congo

CS2 - Singapore

CS3 - UK

CS4- Germany

CS5 London Docklands

Better written responses

Plan don't over plan

Better written responses

Evaluation, both perspectives, to what extent do you agree ?

EC +1
Ec +2
Ec +3
Ec +4

- Discuss whether positive economic impacts for countries from developing tourism outweigh the negative environmental and socio-cultural impacts?

Env-1
Env-2
Env-3
Env-4

Content - access
parts of mind map

SC -1
SC -2
SC -3
SC -4

What the examiners say

“Candidates need to carefully read the full question or key terms in the question, especially at A2. Not doing this is the single biggest cause of under-achievement. Too many candidates offer pre-learnt answers that do not fit exactly the demands of the wording of the question.”

(OCR, June 2013)

What's my essay title?



Better
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responses

Essay Title A

Example of an
introduction

Example of an
introduction

Example of an
introduction

Essay Title B

Example of an
introduction

Example of an
introduction

Example of an
introduction

Essay Title C

Example of an
introduction

Example of an
introduction

Example of an
introduction



Better
written
responses

What's my essay title?

Essay A Evaluate how plate tectonics theory helps our understanding of the distribution of seismic and volcanic events.

Essay B 'The decentralisation of retailing and other services has had a major impact on urban areas.' To what extent do you agree with this statement?

Essay C Examine the effects of greying population on health and welfare services?

Essay D Choose one named area of the world and explain why it is considered a disaster hotspot?

Essay E Using a case study, assess the causes and consequences of coastal flooding?

Essay F Using a case study; assess how successful one country has been in managing population change?

What the examiners say

Introductions

‘Don’t include irrelevant ‘chat’ or introductions that repeat the question.

(OCR Examiners’ report June , 2013)

Clear

Unambiguous

Context overview

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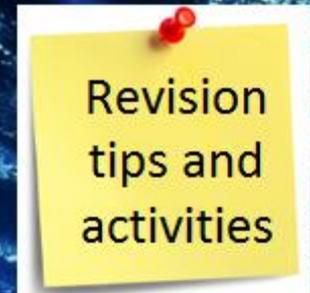
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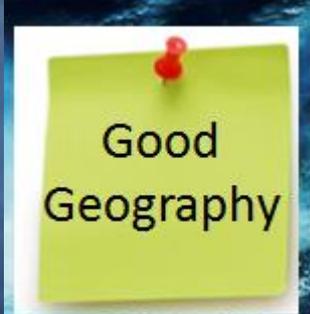
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Revision
tips and
activities



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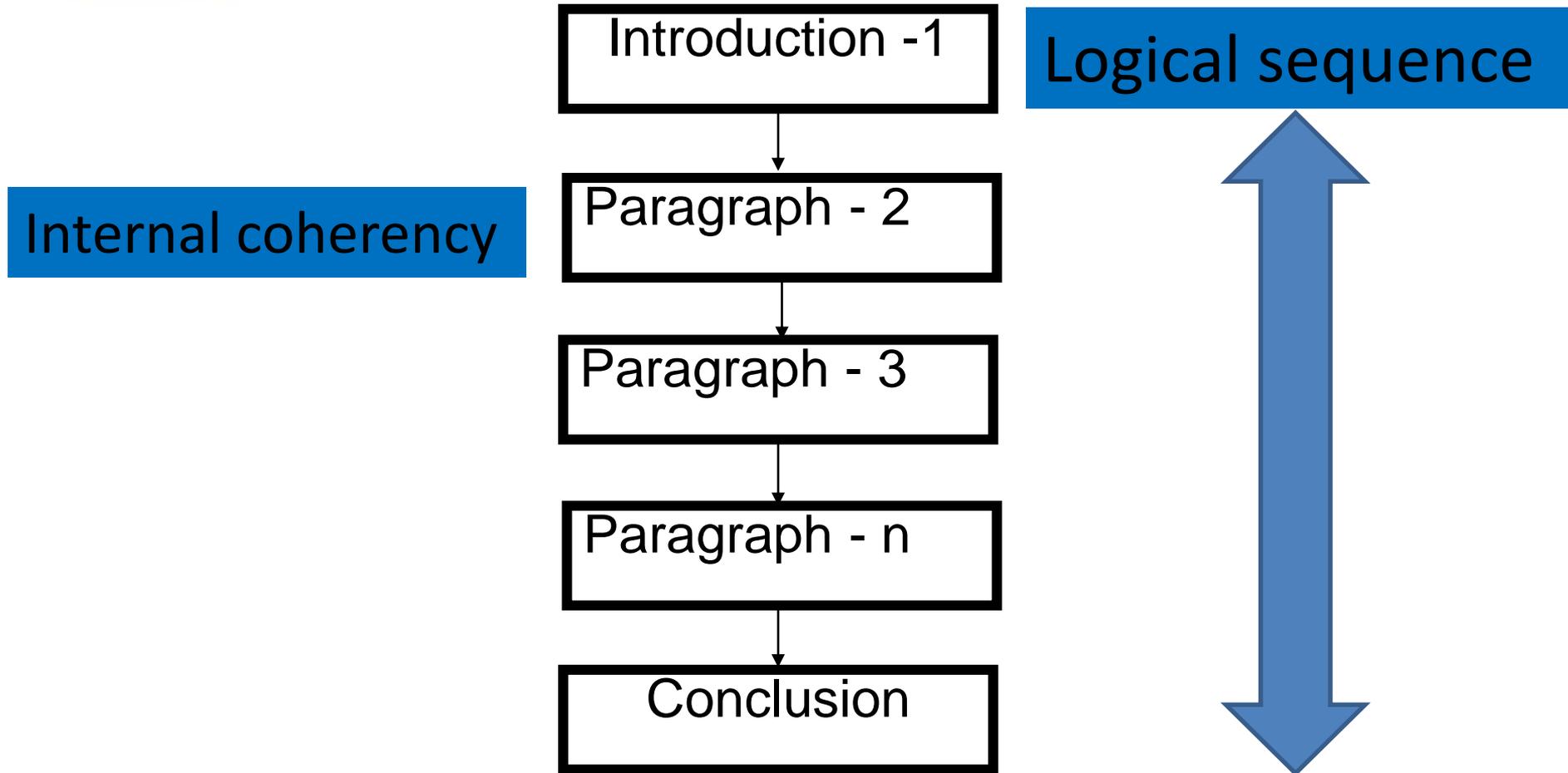


Good
Geography



Structure

- Clear structure to response





Better
written
responses

Paragraphs

‘Free standing, self-supporting unit of text’

- A core statement (point) of information or opinion
- **A context** to establish the significance of this statement to the point of the essay
- **Evidence** to support the statement
- **Examples** to illustrate the sources
- References for sources

PEEL

(**P**oint, **E**xplanation, **E**xample , **L**ink back to question)

- To what extent do you agree that tourism often brings mainly negative socio-cultural impacts?

(-) ive
SC

Local people may adapt existing practices e.g. repeating religious ceremonies a number of times instead of just once on a significant day, in response to the needs of tourists wanting entertainment.

Spain's Alarde festival is an example of such staged authenticity which eventually led to its demise **so undermining local people's traditions** and creating a form of cultural commodification.

PEEL

(Point, Explanation, Example, Link back to question)

What the examiners say

Extended writing

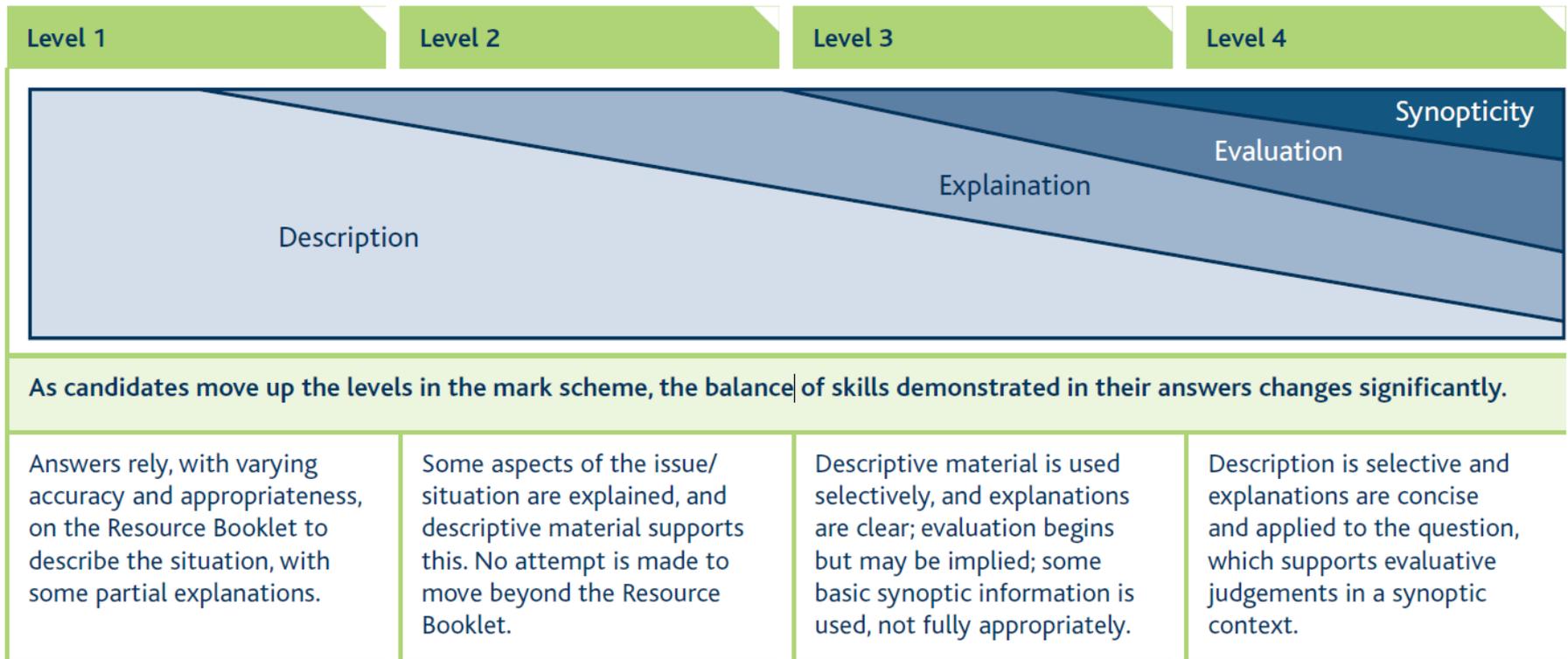
Structure clear introduction, with one major aspect per paragraph and a conclusion. Evaluation

With the emphasis on suggesting that the viewpoint may vary over time, location and depending on who you are within the community.

a number of case studies at different scales and/or locations.

(OCR teacher support materials , 2013)

What the examiners say



Reference: **Getting Started GCE Geography** (Edexcel , 2013)

What the examiners say

Poor responses result where candidates:

- Provide answers based on pre-learnt case studies – ‘answering the question they wanted to come up’
- Make uncritical use of case studies
- Poor use and spelling of terminology
- Identify synoptic elements ‘Like I did...’
- Are more descriptive than analytical
- Offer no conclusion



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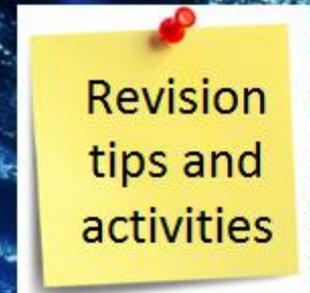
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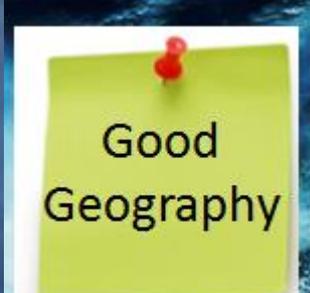
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Revision
tips and
activities

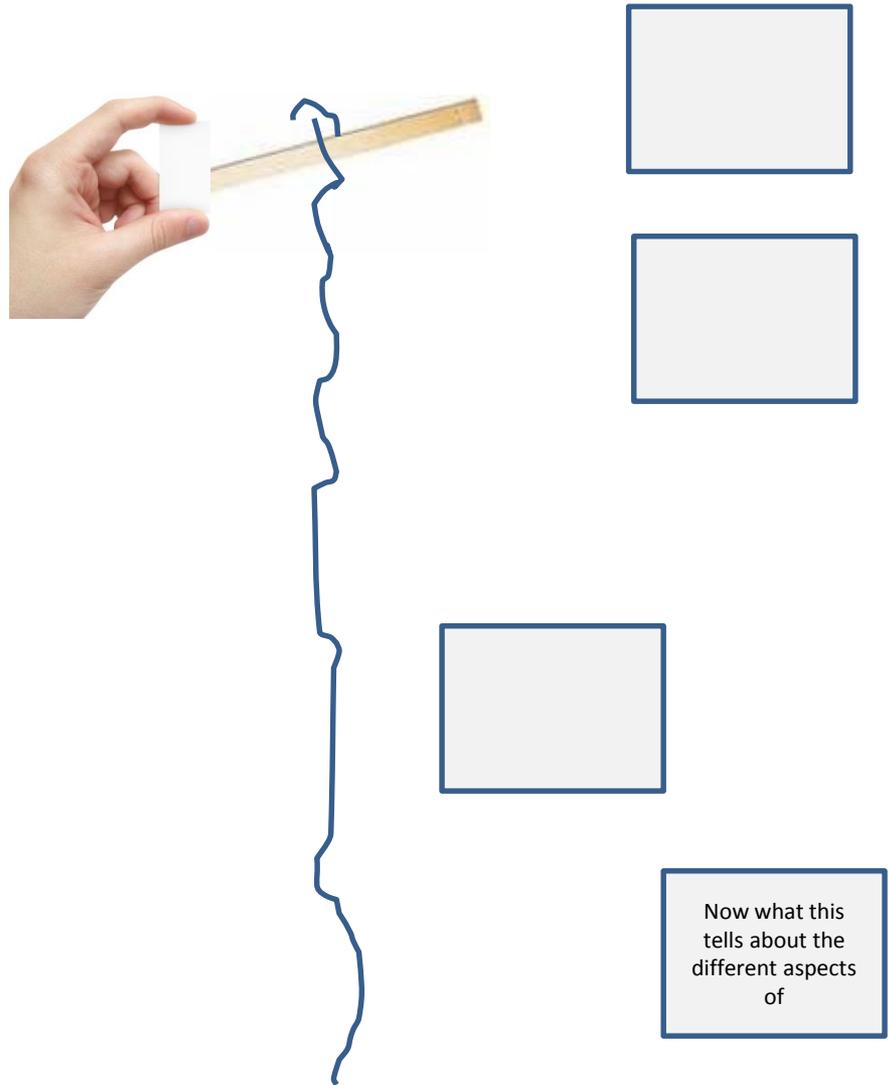


Better
written
responses



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Geography

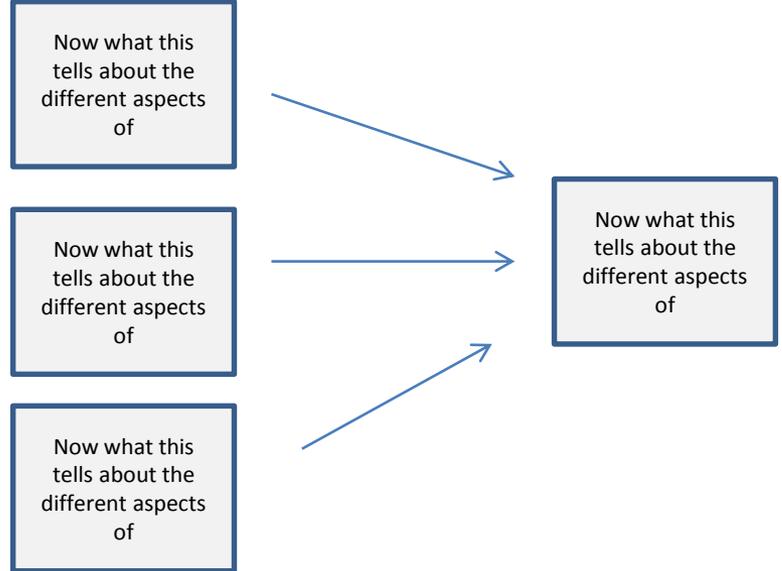
3D essays



Speaking essay



Joint conclusions



What's my essay title?

How useful is GNP as a measure of a country's development?

Discuss the effectiveness of GNP as a measure of a country's level of development?

Using case studies, evaluate how effective GNP is as an indicator of development and people's quality of life ?

The GNP is given as an average of the whole country and does not take into account disparities which arise within a country. For example Russia.....

Another disparity the GNP does not take into account is the difference between incomes of people from different racial and religious backgrounds.....

This results from the racial segregation or apartheid that gripped the country from 1948 to 1994.

GNP doesn't take into account money made through black markets. The data from these is difficult to obtain and is not included within a country's GNP..

Determining how developed a country is on its economic wealth is a dated method which does not take into the quality of life and human development.....

Another problem with using GNP to measure economic development is that it is given in US dollars. This means

Finally it fails to take into account the social and environmental cost of economic development.....

Introduction

Development is a complex geographical concept which geographers have tried to measure to show that countries are at different stages of 'development'. There are many different ways to measure how developed a country is including single e.g. Life expectancy or GNP per capita and composite indicators e.g. HDI . Gross National Product (GNP) is a single indicator which measures the total value (in US \$) of all the products and services produced in a year by a country's nationals. Using GNP is one way of measuring how developed a county is from an economic perspective compared to others but how reliable is it as a measure of development?

Conclusion

Overall, a better measure of development than taking a single indicator such as GDP is to use a number of measures that contribute to a country's development such as economic growth, health and education. The composite indicator, the Human Development Index measures GNP per capita, number of years schooling and the life expectancy of a country's population is a good example but increasingly development needs to also consider issues relating to sustainable development, human rights and democracy.

What the examiners say

Conclusions

Advice from Principal Examiners from different awarding bodies

‘Show some attempt at a conclusion as the mark scheme rewards clear or effective conclusions’
(OCR Examiners’ report June , 2013)

“Longer conclusions often simply repeat information already presented”

What the examiners say

For the 15 mark '(b)' sub-questions in Section A, the most common command words used are 'assess' and 'evaluate'. A conclusion can be a useful tool to come to a final judgement having weighed-up both sides of the argument. Conclusions do not need to be long, but they show the examiner that having considered the question from several angles you are now prepared to provide an overview

Why lack of supplies may cause worries, however with new reserves, and innovative extraction methods, these uncertainties imply lead to exploration of further oil energy supplies



This conclusion makes reference to several key uncertainties in terms of energy futures, such as peak oil, political and environmental concerns. Notice how at the very end, the candidate recognises that there are some forces at work to reduce energy uncertainty.



The example on a conclusion shown here is about the length you should aim for.

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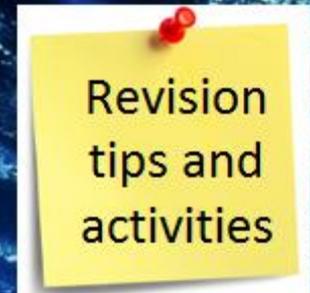
Putting it all together - Speaking or 3D essay

6:00 Revision tips

1 Ropey revision

2 Hexagons: making connections

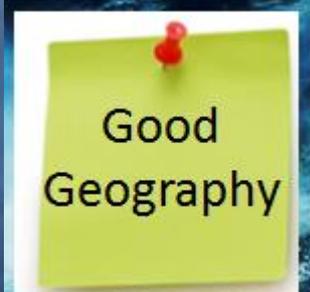
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Revision
tips and
activities



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responses



Good
Geography

Checklists personal planners, flash cards, mnemonics, acronyms , speaking essays, model essays, peer assessment, self assessment, student use of examiner reports

Example of Revision checklist for AQA A2 topic

Plate tectonics and associated hazards	How well I understand			
	Poor	OK	Good	Excellent
Content The structure of the Earth in cross-section, and the theory of and evidence for plate tectonics and continental drift. Key Terminology/case studies <i>Wegner, Sea floor spreading, Mid Atlantic Ridge</i>				
The tectonic processes operating at plate margins and hotspots, and the causes and nature of <u>vulcanicity</u> , seismicity and associated landforms. Key Terminology/case studies <i>Hawaiian islands; Nazca/S American</i>				
The relationship between types of plate margins and the type and frequency of volcanic activity Key Terminology/case studies				

Revision tips and activities



Centre forward

Centre forward



Left midfield

Centre midfield

Centre midfield

Right midfield



Halo
salt
marsh

Litho
Volcanic

Psammo
sand

Hydro
Fresh
water

Left-back

Centre-back

Centre-back

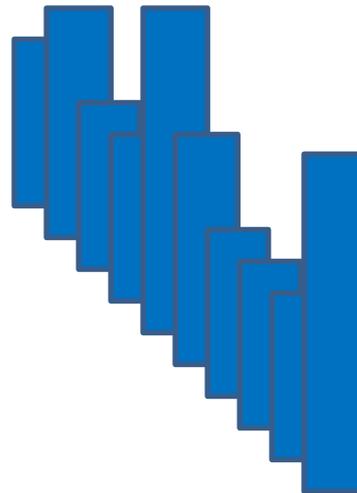
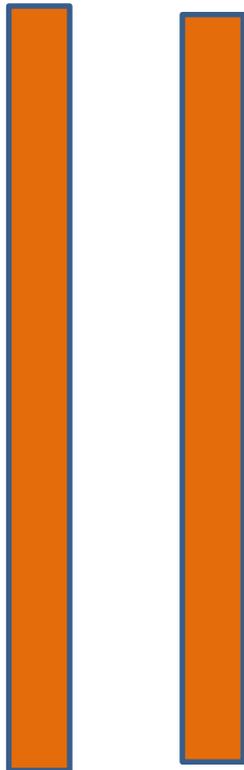
Right-back



Goalkeeper

It's a team game

1. Ropey Revision



X axis

Y axis

Bars

Lines

DTM

TALC

Climate

Pop pyramids

??????????

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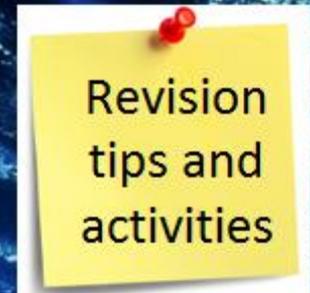
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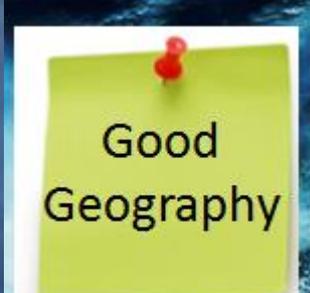
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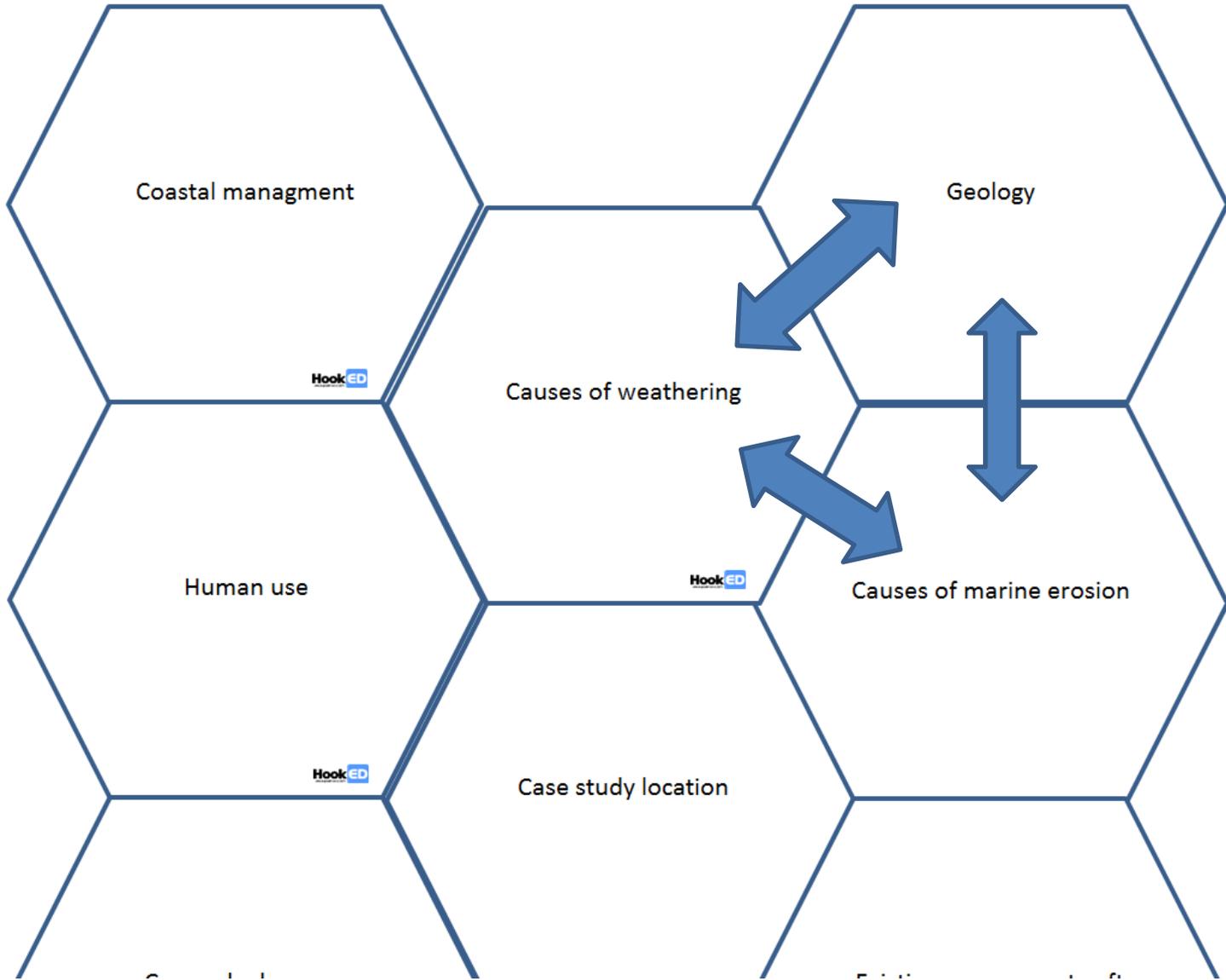


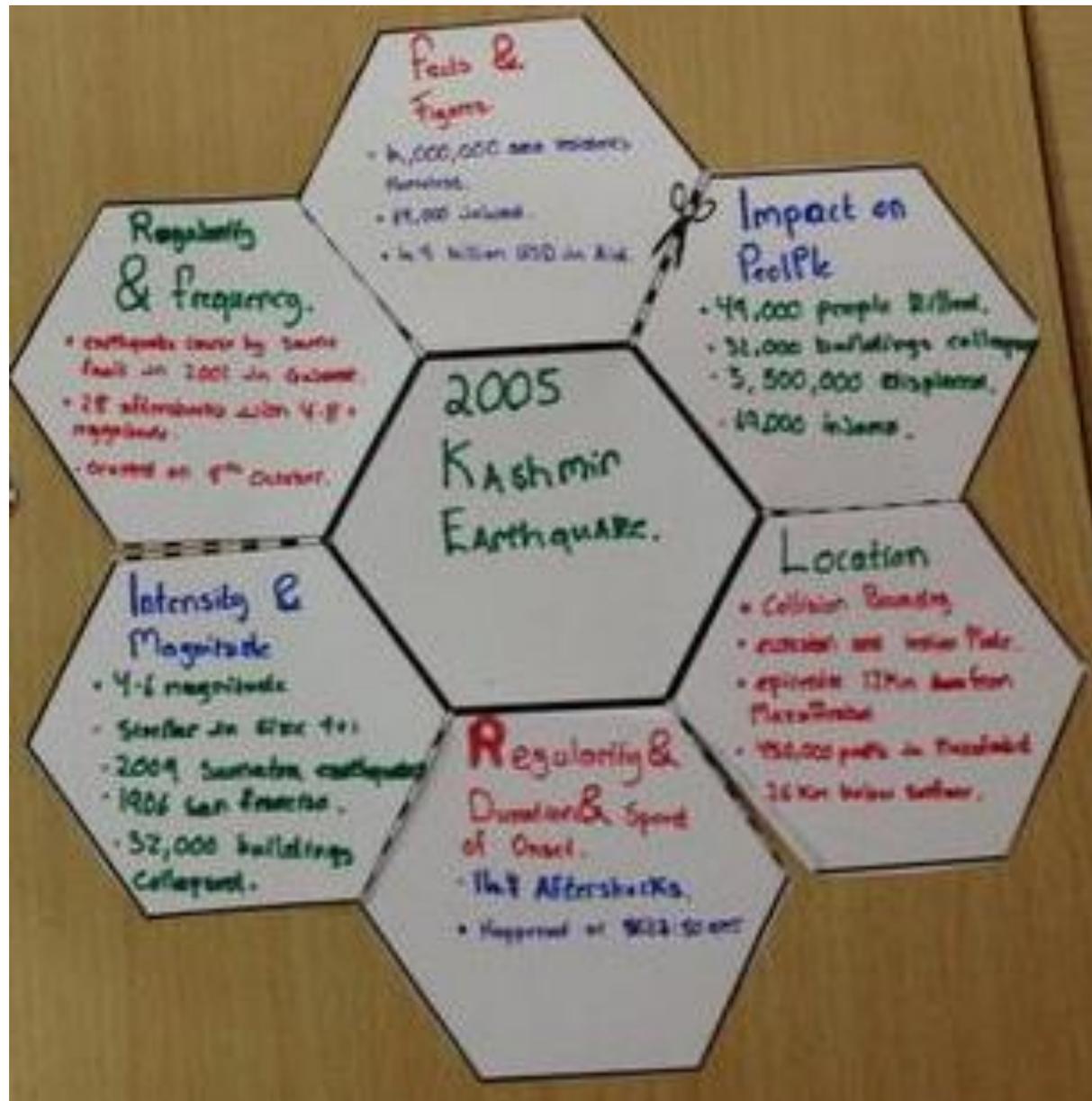
Better
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responses



Good
Geography

2. Hexagons







- Home
- News
- About
- SOLO Taxonomy

HookED SOLO Hexagon Generator

This HookED app populates a **SOLO Hexagon Template**.
Brainstorm content ideas and enter them in the fields below.
Click "Generate Document" to populate the template.

10 Small Hexagons per page

2 Large Hexagons per page

Hexagon 1.

Hexagon 2.

Hexagon 3.

Hexagon 4.

Hexagon 5.

Hexagon 6.

Hexagon 7.

Hexagon 8.

Hexagon 9.

Hexagon 10.

Apps

Learning Intention Generator

SOLO Symbol Generator

SOLO Self Assessment Tool

Functioning Knowledge Rubric Generator

Declarative Knowledge Rubric Generator

SOLO

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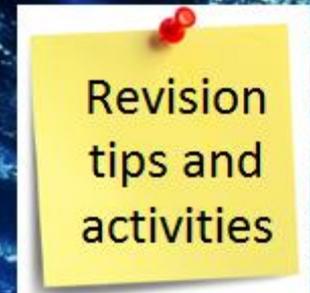
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Putting it all together - Speaking or 3D essay

6:00 Revision tip 1 Ropey revision

6:10 Revision tip 2 Hexagons: making connections

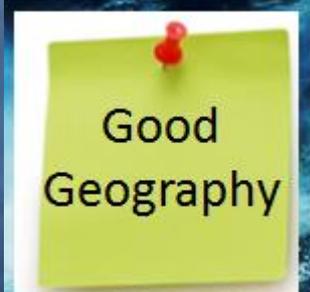
6:25 Final remarks and close



Revision
tips and
activities



Better
written
responses



Good
Geography

A level Geography

Synopticity In the news

(d) Explain how **personal** and **local** data sources can be used to study population changes and people's roots. (5)

- Family history about people's roots may be passed down to each generation.
- Photos/videos of past relatives may exist proving where people lived.
- National census results from 1911 will show where family members lived/how old they were and what their occupation was.
- Parish registers will show when family members got married or when they died. ↓
- Old registers of ships may prove when past relatives migrated to different areas.

(Total for Question 5 = 10 marks)

What am I worth?

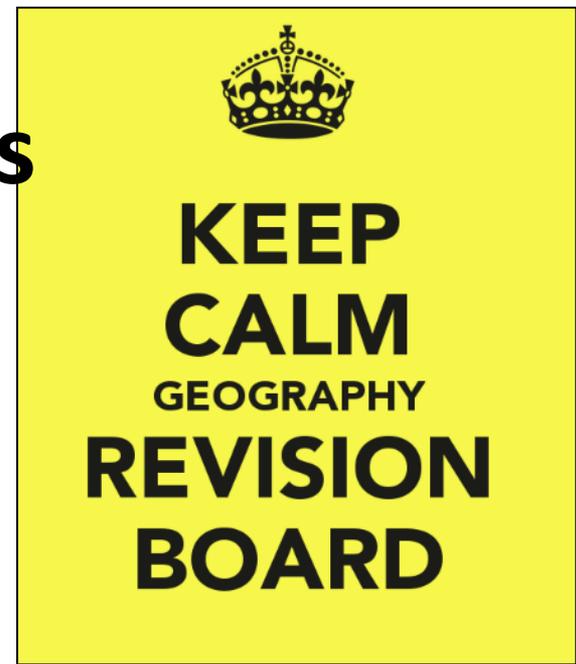
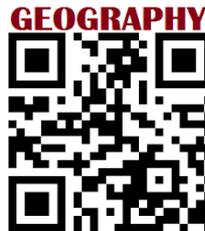
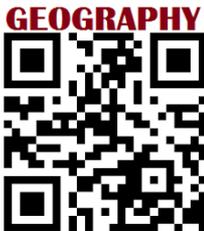
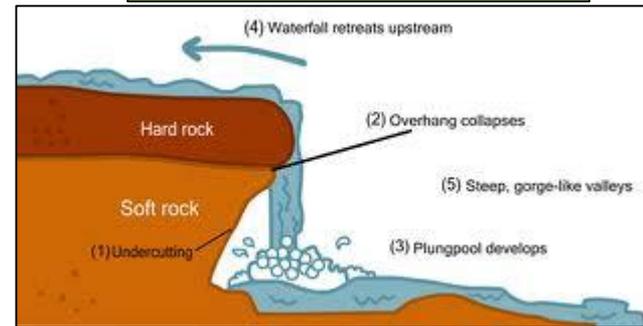


Diagram of the week



PEEL

BRIC

MINT

CASH