



EXAM  
SUCCESS

This really useful guide is owned by:

G E O

G R A

P H Y

REVISION

# Why is a GCSE in GEOGRAPHY SO IMPORTANT?

## 1 Lifetime Earnings

Geography ranks in the top five GCSE subjects for lifetime earnings. Each grade improvement adds an average of £11,598 to lifetime earnings. Students with a GCSE in geography earn over £50,000 more in their lifetime compared to those with just English and Maths GCSEs.

## 2 Education Foundation

A GCSE in Geography is a solid foundation for further studies like A-levels in Geography or Environmental Science, and degrees in geology, environmental management, or urban studies. It is also classified as a facilitating subject by the Russell Group, opening doors to a variety of university courses.

## 3 Transferable Skills

Geography develops critical thinking, data analysis, research, and problem-solving skills. These skills are highly valued in sectors such as environmental consultancy, urban planning, and government policy-making, making geography students highly employable.

## 4 High Employment Rates

According to the UK's Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA), Geography graduates enjoy a 94.4% employment or further study rate within six months of graduating, reflecting the high demand and value of the skills gained through studying geography.

## 5 Global Awareness

Geography equips students with knowledge about pressing global challenges like climate change, deforestation, and urbanisation. Understanding these critical issues is essential, especially as climate change is identified as a top global risk by the World Economic Forum.

# A wise person once said\*

“if you don ’t r e v i s e , y o u ’ r e n o t  
g o i n g t o d o a l l t h a t w e l l .”



\*We've no idea who the wise person was, or if they even existed, BUT if they did, they were talking sense. This guide is designed to help you smash your GCSE geography exam. Do yourself a massive favour and follow it.

# WELCOME

# GEOGRAPHY REVISION

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START REVISING NOW

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# Trust US Start REVISING Now



The pressure of GCSE exams can feel overwhelming, especially when you're juggling multiple subjects. Geography is a subject that requires both understanding and retention of a lot of detailed information. So, why wait until the last minute? Starting your revision early could be the key to acing your GCSE Geography exam, and here's why.

## **1. Geography Covers a Vast Range of Topics**

From physical landscapes like rivers, coasts, and tectonics to human topics like population dynamics, urbanisation, and development, Geography touches on a wide array of subjects. Each topic is layered with important details: case studies, statistics, processes, and theories. Trying to cram all this information a few weeks before the exam would be like

attempting to memorise an entire encyclopaedia overnight—stressful, and most likely ineffective. Starting early allows you to break the content down into manageable chunks, giving you time to understand each aspect fully without the panic.

## **2. Case Studies Need Time to Sink In**

Geography relies heavily on case studies—real-world examples that support the theories you learn. For instance, knowing the details of how the Haiti earthquake impacted communities or how climate change affects coastal erosion requires not just memorization but also the ability to explain and analyse these examples. Starting revision early allows you to revisit these case studies multiple times, helping you build a deeper understanding. This makes recalling them in the exam easier and more fluid, so you can

focus on applying the knowledge instead of scrambling to remember facts.

### **3. Build Exam Technique Gradually**

GCSE Geography isn't just about knowing facts—it's about applying that knowledge in exam conditions. Questions often ask for explanations, justifications, and evaluations. You need to be able to structure your answers clearly and concisely, which is a skill that takes practice. By starting your revision early, you have time to go over past papers, practice different types of questions, and perfect your timing. This gradual building of confidence will make you feel more prepared when the actual exam day arrives.

### **4. Avoid the Stress of Cramming**

Cramming the night before the exam might seem like a rite of passage for some students, but it's not a strategy that works well in Geography. The subject demands long-term retention of knowledge, not short bursts of memory recall. Starting your revision early spreads the workload, allowing you to revisit topics multiple times and reinforcing your learning. This not only helps the information stick but also reduces stress levels as exam season approaches. You'll feel more in control and less panicked, knowing that you've prepared thoroughly.

### **5. Identify Your Areas for Development Early**

Starting your revision now gives you plenty of time to assess where your strengths and weaknesses lie. Perhaps you're confident with physical Geography but struggle with human geography topics like urban issues or economic development. Early revision gives you the chance to target these weak areas, ask for help when needed, and practice until you feel more confident. The earlier you identify these gaps in your knowledge, the more time you'll have to fill them.

## **DID YOU KNOW?**

Almost 300,000 students take GCSE Geography and you're competing with all of them for good grades.

### **6. Use Active Revision Strategies**

When you start early, you have time to explore a variety of revision techniques that you. Flashcards, mind maps, quizzes, or even teaching a friend can all help reinforce what you've learned. The more active your revision, the more likely the information will stick. Early preparation allows you to find out what works best for you and apply it consistently, rather than resorting to passive revision like re-reading notes, which is less effective.

### **7. Geography Links to Current Events**

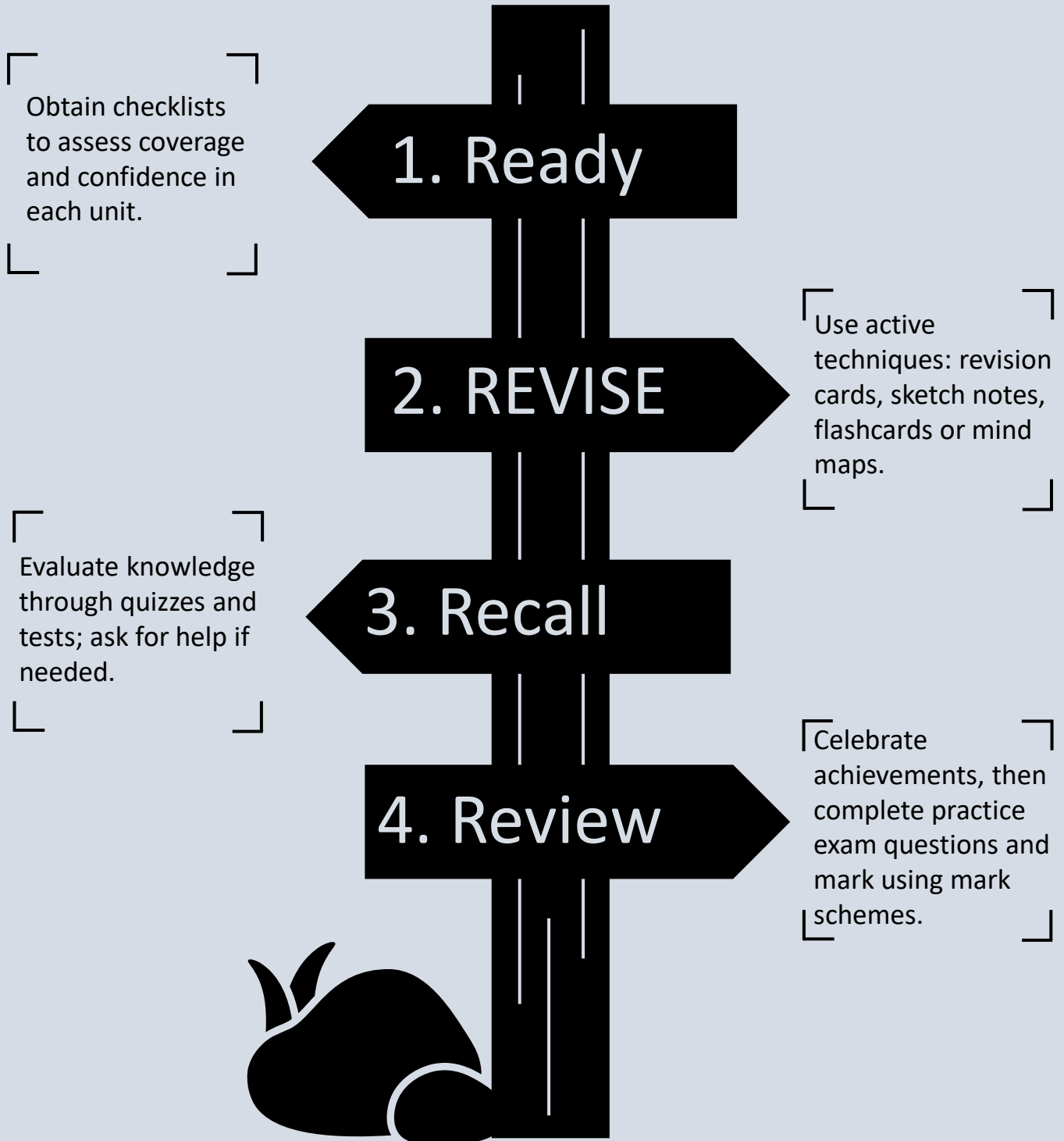
One of the unique aspects of Geography is its direct link to the world around us. Whether it's climate change, migration, or natural disasters, many of the topics you learn are being discussed in the news right now. Starting your revision early means you can connect your learning to these real-world examples as they happen, making the subject come alive. Keeping up with current events also adds depth to your answers in the exam, showing the examiner that you can apply your knowledge to contemporary issues.

### **The Bottom Line: Starting Early Sets You Up for Success**

GCSE Geography is a subject that rewards early and consistent revision. It's not just about memorising facts; it's about understanding complex processes, mastering case studies, and honing exam techniques. By starting your revision early, you give yourself time to develop a deep, well-rounded understanding of the subject, which will ultimately lead to higher grades and lower stress. So why wait? Start now, and future you will thank you!

# The 4 Rs

## How to revise effectively



Find out more about these approaches in the next sections.

# Step 1 Ready

## What do you need to revise?



Yup, that's going to hurt! Before you 'dive' into your revision a little planning can save a sting in the exam.

At the beginning of our revision journey, it would be very useful to know what you need to revise and when you will revise it.

The overview to the right shows the structure of the AQA GCSE Geography course. You will complete three exam papers. Paper 1 covers living with the physical environment, paper 2, challenges in the human environment and paper 3 geographical applications.

Paper 1 and 2 will examine your geographical knowledge, understanding and some skills. Paper 3 will cover an issue evaluation (which you will have a copy of before the exam), fieldwork (unfamiliar and the fieldwork you have completed) and geographical skills.

To begin with, we're going to focus revision on paper 1 and 2.

### **Paper 1**

The Challenge of Natural Hazards  
The Living World  
Physical Landscapes in the UK – two from:

- River Landscapes in the UK
- Coastal Landscapes in the UK
- Glacial Landscapes in the UK

### **Paper 2**

Urban Issues and Challenges  
The Changing Economic World  
The Challenge of Resource Management – and one from:

- Food Resources
- Water Resources
- Energy Resources

### **Paper 3**

Issue Evaluation  
Fieldwork




# SCAN ME


download support  
resources


**AQA THE CHALLENGE OF NATURAL HAZARDS**

Paper 1  
The Challenge of Natural Hazards  
PLC

Red = Not confident at all  
Amber = Some confidence  
Green = Very confident

 reference notes

 interactive quizzes



	Red	Amber	Green
<b>Natural hazards pose major risks to people and property</b>			
I can give a definition of natural hazard.			
I can identify the different types of natural hazard.			
I know the factors affecting hazard risk.			
<b>Earthquakes and volcanic eruptions are the result of physical processes</b>			
I know the main features of plate tectonics theory.			
I know the global distribution of earthquakes and volcanic			



## Starting Revision in Year 10

Download the checklist for the unit(s) you have started studying in Y10 from [tinyurl.com/REVstep1](https://tinyurl.com/REVstep1)

Once downloaded, go through the areas covered so far and complete the checklist to identify how confident you feel about each section. This will help you prioritise your revision.



## Starting Revision in Year 11

Download the checklist for the unit(s) you have started studying in Y11 from [tinyurl.com/REVstep1](https://tinyurl.com/REVstep1)

Once downloaded, go through the first unit you covered and complete the checklist to identify how confident you feel about each section. This will help you prioritise your revision. After revising this unit, repeat this for the next unit.

completed your checklist? move onto step 2.

# Step 2 REVISE

## How to revise effectively

THESE  
TECHNIQUES  
DON'T WORK



Highlighting  
information



Copying  
information



Reading  
information



It's time to start revision. Exciting right? Probably not, but before you start you need to make sure you are using an effective revision technique. After all, some are better than others.

Three revision techniques you should avoid at all costs are highlighting, copying and just reading. Experts say these revision techniques have little or no impact on your learning.

Who doesn't love a good highlighter? Going through notes and highlighting makes you feel really productive. However, you may be disappointed to discover, highlighting does little to boost performance. In fact, it can hurt performance. So, put those beautiful colour sticks in the draw.

Similarly, copying mountains of notes from revision books and websites will make you feel good for being so productive. However, when it comes to learning, this technique has little impacts. Just don't do it. It's a waste of time.

Re-reading is a popular revision technique. However, re-reading notes or textbooks is rated very poorly as an effective revision strategy compared to other strategies you could be using. A wealth of research has

shown that passive repetitive reading produces little or no benefit for learning!

Hopefully, you're not too devastated these revision techniques have been thrown in the bin. The good news is, there are other strategies out there that are more effective, interesting and less time-consuming.

Effective revision should involve active recall, spaced repetition and challenge. This might sound complicated, but it's not.

**Active recall** is the most important technique that you can use to make your revision more efficient. It basically involves retrieving stuff from your brain because the act of retrieving information strengthens neural connections (brain cells talking to each other). Active recall can be done by testing yourself.

**Spaced repetition** involves revisiting the topic to help the information stick in your long-term memory. Don't just tick off a topic when you've completed it.

**Challenge** yourself by revising the stuff you find hard. Attack your pain points rather than ignoring them. Avoid the passive revision techniques and do something with the information you are revising.

# THESE TECHNIQUES DO WORK



Revision  
Cards



Sketch  
notes



Mind  
Maps

## Sketchnotes

A sketchnote is a visual note-taking technique that combines both text and simple drawings and icons to summarise complex information in a way that is easy to understand.

### Active recall

Cover your sketchnote and recall the information. Ask someone to quiz you.

### Spaced repetition

Revisit the sketchnote after 24 hours, 3 days, one week then one month.

### Challenge

Summarise information – don't copy.

**1** INCREASE IN THE PROPORTION OF LIVING IN URBAN AREAS

**2** HIC'S 1<sup>st</sup> TO URBANISE  
Industrial revolution  
Mechanisation on farms  
Rural to urban migration  
UK 83% USA 82% EU 74%  
Slowing in HIC's  
Counter-urbanisation in some areas

**3** LIC'S STILL MAINLY RURAL BUT FASTEST RATE OF URBANISATION  
Africa 40% urban 2050 56%  
Asia 50% urban 2050 64%  
2014-2050 37% of urban growth  
India China Nigeria

**4** FACTORS AFFECTING URBANISATION RATES  
MIGRATION: Rural to urban  
NATURAL INCREASE: +live, natural population change (live births > live deaths)  
High number of 18-35 yr olds  
↑ birth rate  
↓ death rate

**5** MEGA CITIES  
MILLION  
2023 = 29 megacities  
2030 = 40+ megacities  
HIC'S Slowing / LIC'S Rapidly ↑  
Tokyo - 38 mill Delhi 28 mill Shanghai 24 mill Mexico City 20 mill

**6** URBANISATION  
PUSH FACTORS  
- Food shortages  
- Limited well-paid job opportunities  
- Limited services  
- poor transport infrastructure  
PULL FACTORS  
+ Prospect of better paid employment  
+ Better schools and healthcare  
+ Friends and family have already moved  
+ Better access to services

What is coastal erosion?

## Flashcards

Creating a flashcard involves writing a key question on one side of the card and the answer on the other. It can be used for definitions, questions and diagrams.

### Active recall

Turn over your flashcard and recall the information. Ask someone to quiz you.

### Spaced repetition

Use the Leitner System.

### Challenge

Summarise information – don't copy.

## Mind Map

A mind map is a highly organised diagram used to present information in an organised way around a central theme.

### Active recall

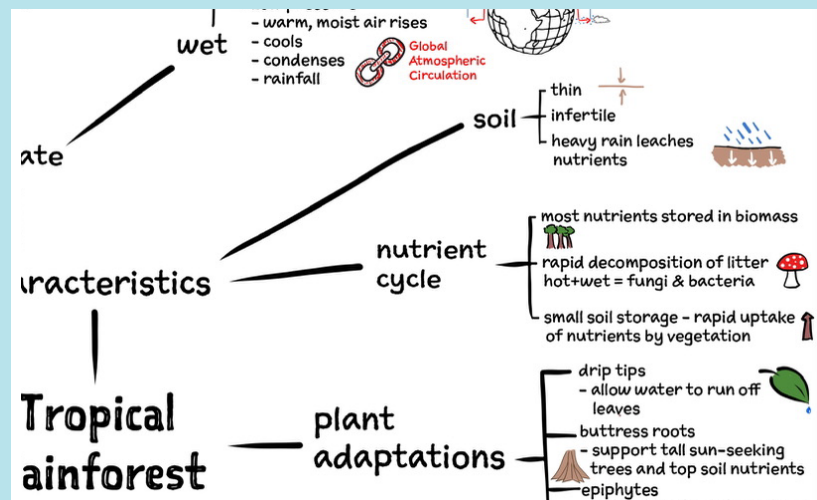
Cover your mind map and recall information. Ask someone to quiz you.

### Spaced repetition

Revisit the mind map after 24 hours, 3 days, one week then one month.

### Challenge

Summarise information – don't copy.



# THESE TECHNIQUES DO WORK



Condensing  
/Chunking



Knowledge  
Organisers



Dual  
coding

## Condensing/Chunking

Condensing text is a way of reducing a large amount of information into key words and images to memorise and retrieve information.

### Active recall

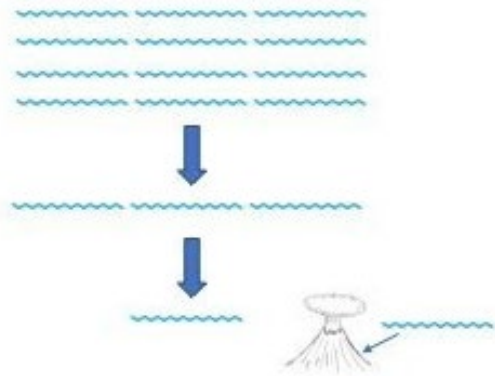
Talk about the subject using only the words.

### Spaced repetition

Revisit the text after 24 hours, 3 days, one week then one month.

### Challenge

Reduce a paragraph to the lowest number of words. Test your recall using them.



### The Challenge of Natural Hazards

Term	Definition					
Natural hazard		Types of natural hazards	Factors affecting hazard risk	Plate margins		
Hazard risk				Destructive margins		
Conservative margin				Constructive margins		
Constructive margin			Conservative margins			
Destructive margin			Why do people live in areas of risk?			
Earthquake			Management			
Immediate response			Definition			
Long term response			Prediction			
Plate margin			Prevention			
Primary effects			Monitoring			
Secondary effects		Earthquake examples				
Tectonic hazard		Volcano examples				
Volcano		How does it reduce risk?				

## Knowledge organiser

Knowledge organisers summarise the key facts and essential knowledge you need to learn into small chunks in a structured way.

### Active recall

Cover elements of the knowledge organiser and recall the key information.

### Spaced repetition

Revisit the knowledge organiser after 24 hours, 3 days, one week then one month.

## Dual Coding

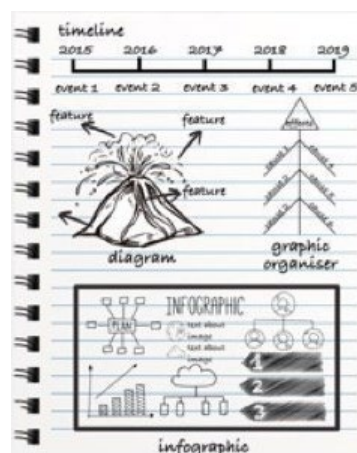
Dual coding involves combining text and images. There are many ways to present information visually, such as with infographics, timelines, cartoon strips, diagrams, and graphic organisers.

### Active recall

Talk about the subject using only the images and text you included.

### Spaced repetition

Revisit the knowledge organiser after 24 hours, 3 days, one week then one month.



# STEP 3 RECA

## Check what you know

The whole point of revision is to improve your knowledge, understanding and remember important information for the exam. Once you've produced a set of revision resources, it's time to check what you can recall. There are several ways you can check to see how effective your revision has been so far. You could use quizzes, a revision clock or just a good old blank piece of paper. After checking what you know, go back and revise any gaps you have.

### Quizzing

**Quizzing** is one of the best ways to revise because it helps you actively remember information rather than just reading it. Every time you test yourself, you're training your brain to recall facts, which makes it easier to remember them in the exam. Plus, quizzing shows you what you know well and highlights areas where you need more practice. By using flashcards or practice questions regularly, you'll build confidence and improve your memory, giving you a better chance to do well in your exams!



### Revision Clocks

Revision clocks are a great tool to help you organise the information you can recall and make sure you cover all the important topics. By dividing your study session into smaller chunks, usually 10-15 minutes per section, revision clocks help you stay focused and avoid getting overwhelmed. They break down big topics into manageable pieces and ensure you're giving equal attention to each part of the subject. Using a revision clock also keeps you on track, helping you stay motivated and making your revision more efficient.



### Blank Page

Blank page is a strategy for checking what you recall about a topic. It is an active revision technique that encourages you to think about what you have studied, what you can remember and encourages you to organise your knowledge and understanding. The strategy gives you an idea of what you already know about a topic, and what you need to work on. To blank page, simply write down everything you remember about a topic. Once finished, check your information against your revision notes. Cover the notes and add information you missed first time.

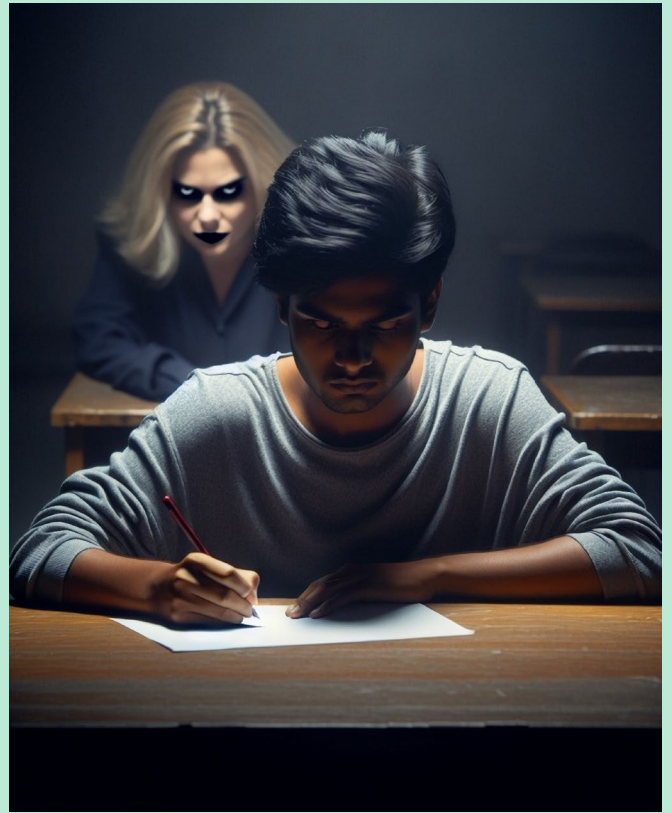


# STEP 4 Review

## Apply what you know to exam questions

You're probably not going to like Step 4. Step 4 involves applying your knowledge and understanding to exam questions.

Believe it or not, practicing past exam questions is one of the most effective ways to revise for GCSE Geography. It helps you become familiar with the types of questions you'll face in the exam and the way they're structured. By doing practice questions, you can learn how to apply your knowledge to real-world scenarios, which is a key part of Geography exams. It also helps improve your time management, so you can answer questions within the exam's time limits. Additionally, past questions highlight areas where you might need more revision, helping you focus on topics that need extra attention. Ultimately, practicing past exam papers builds your confidence and prepares you for the real thing (along with beating the examiner!).



## Exam Papers



### Paper 1

[tinyurl.com/aqageogpaper1](https://tinyurl.com/aqageogpaper1)



### Mark Schemes

[tinyurl.com/aqageogpaper1ms](https://tinyurl.com/aqageogpaper1ms)



### Paper 2

[tinyurl.com/aqageogpaper2](https://tinyurl.com/aqageogpaper2)



### Mark Schemes

[tinyurl.com/aqageogpaper2ms](https://tinyurl.com/aqageogpaper2ms)



### Paper 3

[tinyurl.com/aqageogpaper3](https://tinyurl.com/aqageogpaper3)



### Mark Schemes

[tinyurl.com/aqageogpaper3ms](https://tinyurl.com/aqageogpaper3ms)

# Command Words

Understanding command words in GCSE Geography questions is crucial because they tell you exactly what the examiner wants you to do. Command words like "describe," "explain," "evaluate," or "compare" each require a different type of answer.

If you misunderstand the command word, you might give the wrong type of answer and lose marks, even if you know the content. Learning these words helps you approach questions correctly and gives you the best chance to score higher marks!

Command words	Marks				
	1	2	4	6	9
Identify/State/Name/Give	x	x			
Define	x				
Calculate	x	x			
Label	x	x			
Draw		x			
Outline		x	x		
Compare		x	x		
Describe		x	x		
Suggest		x	x	x	x
Explain			x	x	x
Examine				x	
Assess				x	x
To what extent				x	x
Evaluate					x
Discuss				x	x
Justify				x	x

**Assess** - Make an informed judgement. Approach this similarly to other evaluative commands (evaluate, to what extent, discuss).

**Calculate** – Work out the value of something.

**Compare** – Identify the similarities and differences.

**Complete** – Finish the task by adding information

**Describe** - Set out characteristics – to say what something is, is like, or appears like.

**Discuss** - Present key points about different sides of an argument, issue or the strengths and weaknesses of an idea. Approach this similarly to other evaluative commands (assess, to what extent, evaluate).

**Draw** - Sketch a map or diagram.

**Evaluate** – Judge from evidence, weighing up both sides of an argument. Approach this similarly to other evaluative commands (assess, to what extent, discuss).

**Explain** – Set out the purpose or reasons – say how or why.

**Identify / Name / State / Give / Define** - Identify/name – name or otherwise characterise. State – express in clear terms. Give – produce an answer from recall. Define – state the meaning of a term.

**Justify** - Support a case with evidence – give detailed reasons for an idea.

**Label** - Add specific names or detail to the stimulus.

**Outline** - Set out main characteristics – to give a brief account or summary.

**Suggest** - Present a possible case, to propose an idea, solution or answer.

**To what extent** - Judge the importance or success of (strategy, scheme, project). Approach this similarly to other evaluative commands (assess, evaluate, discuss).

AQA have produced  
a useful guide to  
command words,  
with example  
answers:

[tinyurl.com/geogcommandwords](https://tinyurl.com/geogcommandwords)



## Quick Links

AQA GCSE Online  
reference Notes  
(ideal for revision)



[www.internetgeography.net/aqa-gcse-geography](http://www.internetgeography.net/aqa-gcse-geography)

AQA GCSE Online  
Quizzes (ideal for  
recall)



[www.internetgeography.net/gcse-geography-interactive-revision](http://www.internetgeography.net/gcse-geography-interactive-revision)

AQA GCSE Geography  
Homepage



<https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/geography/gcse/geography-8035>



Paper 1

Paper 2

Paper 3