

How to deliver effective and motivating Issues Based Geography from Edexcel

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Introduction

What is this guide?

This guide has been written to show how Edexcel's GCSE Geography Specification B can be combined with Edexcel's GCE Geography 2008 (A-level) specification into a coherent, non-repetitive issues based Geography course covering the 4 years of GCSE and A-level combined.

Who is this guide for?

This guide will be useful for:

- Geography departments already teaching GCSE Specification B and Edexcel GCE Geography which are reviewing course structure and delivery.
- Geography departments considering a change of specification to include either or both of the Edexcel Geography specifications at GCSE or GCE.
- Geography departments who are new to Edexcel Geography.

It is anticipated that this guide will be used as a basis for departmental level discussion and planning. It is not a definitive guide and centres may wish to consider / adopt parts of it.

Section 1: Edexcel Geography

GCSE Specification B was written to compliment the GCE Geography specification launched by Edexcel in 2008. The two specifications share a common view of what modern Geography should be and why young people should study and engage with the subject:

- Modern geographers need a firm foundation for study, which includes key physical and human processes and patterns.
- Topics studied must include those that are relevant, contemporary and challenging and are likely to engage modern students.
- Fieldwork should be integrated into Geography courses, be 'real' and develop a wide range of skills.
- The complexity of many contemporary issues should be engaged with rather than avoided.

1:1 What is issues based Geography?

Issues based geography stresses:

- The interconnectedness of topics within Geography
- The need for a holistic understanding of geographical issues, problems and challenges
- The need to take account of the views of all players /stakeholders
- Interdisciplinary links, for instance to the sciences, sociology, psychology, law or economics.

Issues based geography requires a traditional understanding of geographical processes and patterns, because students require an understanding of the pieces of the jigsaw, before they can complete the whole puzzle.

GCSE Specification B Units 1 and 2, and AS Units 1 and 2 are very much about understanding the pieces of the jigsaw whereas GCSE Unit 3 and GCE Unit 3 are more concerned with the whole puzzle (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Issues based geography: links to Edexcel's specifications

At all levels	Edexcel GCSE B	Edexcel GCE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are encouraged to see links between topics. • Students are encouraged to see the bigger picture • Students are encouraged to consider issues / problems from a wide variety of perspectives. 	<p>Unit 3 Decision Making</p> <p>Developing decision making skills via a local case study exercise.</p>	<p>Unit 3 Synoptic Issues Analysis</p> <p>Developing synoptic themes and synoptic skills via an integrated regional investigation.</p>

1.2 The benefits?

Adopting a 4 year approach to GCSE + GCE has a number of key benefits which departments may wish to consider. These include improved recruitment, enhanced flexibility and ability to demonstrate detailed planning to external bodies:

1. By avoiding repetition of topics and case studies, GCE can be marketed to Yr 11 students as interesting, challenging and engaging. Geography departments, inevitably, have to compete for students with subjects which often appear new and 'different'.
2. In terms of external assessments such as inspections, it is often valuable to be able to demonstrate that consideration has been given to the transition from GCSE to GCE (and indeed from KS3, as well as into Higher Education)

3. 4 year planning still allows for flexibility depending on the changing abilities of different cohorts as they progress from Yr10 to Yr13; for instance the 'avoid' pathway could be adapted to include elements of the 'support' pathway if a lesser ability cohort required it (see section 2 for suggested pathways).
4. The transition from AS to A2 is often a pressure point for centres as some candidates consider 'dropping' one of their AS levels. A key piece of the decision jigsaw is whether or not candidates feel they will be studying 'the same old stuff'. Planning over 4 years can avoid this possibility and improve AS to A2 retention.
5. By planning over 4 years, gradually developing skills and building knowledge and understanding the end product will be better Geographers, getting better results.

Section 2: Planning a 4 year integrated course

Over the 4 years of GCSE and GCE centres must cover a total of 8 units. Units consist of:

- All 'core' units e.g. Unit 1 and 3 at GCE level, where there are no options.
- All 'option' units e.g. Unit 4 at GCE, where there is a full choice of topic
- Mixed units which have some core content and some options e.g. Units 1 and 2 at GCSE

The exact content covered over 4 years is therefore relatively flexible and can be chosen to fit the needs of individual centres. Departments might wish to consider that:

- Some topics have a significant overlap e.g. Coastal Change Unit 1 GCSE and Crowded Coasts Unit 2 GCE.
- Some topics are strongly linked but might be seen more as building on one another, rather than (potentially) repeating; a good example is the GCSE Unit 1 option Extreme Climates and the GCE Unit 2 option Extreme Weather.
- Some topics appear at one level but not the other e.g. River Processes Unit 1 GCSE or Superpower Geographies Unit 3 GCE.
- Option choices at GCE and GCSE can lead to a 4 year course which leans more toward physical or human geography.
- Changing 1 or 2 topics each year is often desirable to either make GCE more different to GCSE, or more supportive of it. Many centres ask for the views of students before making final choices, at least for some options.

Two pathways are illustrated in the next sub-section to assist departmental level planning.

NB: The two pathways are illustrative only: many other combinations of options are of course possible.

Departments might also wish to consider two areas of additional flexibility that can be used to either 'support' or 'avoid':

Unit 4 GCSE controlled assessment: in small centres (or large centres with multiple teachers) it is possible for students to have a choice of controlled assessment task. This could be achieved, for instance, if some students undertook a rural study while others undertook a coastal one. Often this can be achieved in the same physical location.

Unit 4 A2 Researching Geography: many centres give candidates a choice of which option to study. Some options link to other areas of the 4 year course more closely than others. Departments could choose to offer one supportive option such as Tectonic Hazards and one other which avoids any chance of repetition e.g. Cultural Diversity or Life on the Margins. A small number of centres offer a free choice of any of the six options

2.1 'Avoid' pathway

This pathway, over 4 years, is illustrated in the table below. Key features include:

- The River Processes option is chosen in GCSE Unit 1 (Rivers is not a GCE topic); the Crowded Coasts option is chosen in AS Unit 2 and the Rural /Countryside topic is chosen as a focus for the GCSE Unit 4 Controlled Assessment. This means both rivers and coasts are covered once over the 4 years.
- Changing Countryside is chosen as one of the GCSE Unit 2 options (which links to the Controlled Assessment choice); World of Work is the other option - this has limited links to Unit 1 at AS.

- Unequal Spaces is chosen as the human option for AS Unit 2.
- In Unit 4 at A2, Cold Environments is chosen. Other options for this Unit which would be very different to anything studied before include Cultural Diversity, and Pollution and Human Health.

CORE

OPTIONS

Unit 1 Dynamic Planet (GCSE)

Restless Earth	Coastal Change
Climate and Change	River Processes
Battle for the Biosphere	Oceans on the Edge
Water World	Extreme Climates

Unit 2 People and the Planet (GCSE)

Population Dynamics	Changing Cities
Consuming Resources	Changing Countryside
Living Spaces	Development Dilemmas
Making a living	World at Work

Unit 3 Making Geographical Decisions (GCSE)

Pressures / conflicts	ONE controlled assessment task on either:
Players /options	Coastal environments
Sustainable development	Rural / Countryside
Environmental issues	River environments
	Town / City

Unit 1 Global Challenges (AS)

Going Global	Unit 2 Geographical Research (AS)
World at Risk	Crowded Coasts
	Extreme Weather
	Rebranding Places
	Unequal spaces

Unit 3 Contested Planet (A2)

Energy Security	Unit 4 Geographical Research (A2)
Water Conflicts	Tectonic hazards
Biodiversity under Threat	Cold Environments
Superpower Geographies	Life on the Margins
Bridging the Development Gap	Pollution and Human Health
Technological Fix?	Cultural Diversity
	Consuming the Rural landscape

The choices shown above generate a 4 year course with a good balance of physical and human geography; students would cover a wide range of physical geography topics rivers, coasts, extreme climates, tectonic and natural hazards, biogeography, climate change and cold environments.

2.2 'Support' pathway

This pathway, shown below, has the following key features:

- Coasts are studied in depth. As an option in GCSE Unit 1 the focus would be on key processes and coastal defences. This could be combined with Controlled Assessment for GCSE Unit 4. The Crowded Coasts option is chosen for AS Unit 2 allowing students to carry forward some of their knowledge and understanding, albeit towards a higher level.

- The GCSE Unit 1 option Oceans on the Edge benefits from backward linkages to the core topic Battle for the Biosphere, and forward linkages to A2 Unit 3 Biodiversity under Threat - especially if marine ecosystems are used as a focus.
- GCSE Unit 2 options Changing Cities and Development Dilemmas respectively have forward links to AS Unit 1 World Cities and AS Unit 2 Rebranding places, and A2 Unit 3 Bridging the Development Gap
- Having studied Restless Earth for GCSE Unit 1, and World at Risk in AS Unit 1, the A2 Unit 4 option Tectonic Hazards is an obvious extension of prior study.

CORE

OPTIONS

Unit 1 Dynamic Planet (GCSE)

Restless Earth Climate and Change Battle for the Biosphere Water World	Coastal Change
	River Processes
	Oceans on the Edge
	Extreme Climates

Unit 2 People and the Planet (GCSE)

Population Dynamics Consuming Resources Living Spaces Making a living	Changing Cities
	Changing Countryside
	Development Dilemmas
	World at Work

Unit 3 Making Geographical Decisions (GCSE)

Pressures / conflicts Players /options Sustainable development Environmental issues	ONE controlled assessment task on either:
	Coastal environments
	Rural / Countryside River environments
	Town / City

Unit 4 Researching Geography (GCSE)

Unit 1 Global Challenges (AS)

Going Global World at Risk	Crowded Coasts
	Extreme Weather
	Rebranding Places

Unit 2 Geographical Research (AS)

Unequal spaces

Unit 3 Contested Planet (A2)

Energy Security Water Conflicts Biodiversity under Threat Superpower Geographies Bridging the Development Gap Technological Fix?	Tectonic hazards
	Cold Environments
	Life on the Margins
	Pollution and Human Health
	Cultural Diversity
	Consuming the Rural landscape

Unit 4 Geographical Research (A2)

This pathway has the benefit of familiarity, which may suit some students. It has a narrower range of topics especially in terms of physical geography.

2.3 A summary of similarities and differences GCSE topics -v- GCE topics

Planning over 4 years should help avoid the 'we did this last year with Miss...' syndrome. This should aid retention as well as maintaining student interest.

Inevitably some topics do appear at GCSE and GCE although always in a different guise and with different content and skills. Some concepts and processes remain the same at both levels. Careful planning can avoid needlessly repeating similar content and GCSE and GCE.

The following are examples of general topic areas which appear at GCSE and GCE and some brief guidance on how they **differ** between the 2 levels. For detailed **content and guidance**, the **specifications** should be consulted at:

GCE: <http://www.edexcel.com/quals/gce/gce08/geography/Pages/default.aspx>

GCSE: <http://www.edexcel.com/quals/gcse/gcse09/geography/b/Pages/default.aspx>

Tectonic Hazards

GCSE Unit 1 Restless Earth	GCE Unit 1 World at Risk	GCE Unit 4 Tectonic Hazards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus on processes; earth's internal structure and the driving forces behind plate tectonics. Focus on different plate boundary types, why they are different and the different hazards they produce. Examples of tectonic hazards to draw out impacts, plus management and response. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This has much more global focus on who is at risk from all hazards, of which Tectonic hazards are only 1 part. Focus on global hazard patterns and trends in relation to the risk equation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An in depth examination of tectonic processes and tectonic settings Focus on tectonic landscapes Very detailed consideration of responses, using (for instance) the hazard management cycle applied to a wide range of case studies.

Coasts

GCSE Unit 1 Coastal Change option	GCSE Unit 4 Coastal Controlled Assessment Option	GCE Unit 2 Crowded Coasts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus on the formation of coastal landforms and key coastal processes (weathering, erosion, movement, mass transport, deposition) Coastal change, retreat and conflict. Coastal management options 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will depend on the titles published for the relevant year. In most cases titles can be chosen to either strongly link with work covered in class or take a slightly different focus. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Processes covered in Unit 1 at GCSE are relevant, and might only need some revision / refreshing. Focus on competition, crowding and conflict Coastal land use change and development Erosion and flood risk and a wide range of management options, Must be linked to fieldwork and research.

Ecosystems and Biodiversity

GCSE Unit 1 Battle for the Biosphere	GCSE Unit 1 Oceans on the Edge option	GCE Unit 3 Biodiversity under Threat
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on terrestrial biomes • The global pattern of biomes and factors influencing this, plus local variations • Biosphere life support system; goods and services • Degradation on the biosphere by humans • Management options. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on marine biomes • Disruption to marine biomes by human activity • Growing pressures on finite marine resources • Management options and examples 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on terrestrial and marine, specialising in chosen biomes • Focus on factors influencing biodiversity and threats to biodiversity • Detailed evaluation of a range of management strategies from a broad spectrum

Climate and Climate Change

GCSE Unit 1 Climate and Change	GCE Unit World at Risk
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Causes of Natural climate change on a range of timescales • Impact of past climate change on people e.g. Little Ice Age, and physical systems e.g. Ice Age mega fauna. • Current climate change causes, the enhanced greenhouse effect and uncertainty over future climate projections. • Illustrating the challenges of future climate through the UK and one developing country. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unit 1 enquiry question 4 could be covered in terms of refreshing / revision, with some additional depth on causes and evidence. • Consideration of how far current global warming is unprecedented • Detailed consideration on uncertainty, plus controversy over some data; tipping point ideas. • Impacts in Africa and the Arctic • Detailed consideration of adaptation versus mitigation • Actions at all scales and the role of different players; why some players may not want to act.

Urbanisation and Cities

GCSE Unit 2 Living Spaces	GCSE Unit 2 Changing Cities option	GCE Unit 1 Going Global	GCE Unit 2 Rebranding Places
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Studying a range of urban living spaces at different levels of development • Pressure for living spaces • Quality of life issues • Sustainable living spaces. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examining urban resource consumption • Urban ecofootprints and managing urban consumption • Greener models of urbanisation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • World cities and contrasting mega-cities • Processes of urban growth; suburbanisation and shanty town growth • Sustainable mega-cities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change, decline and regeneration in urban areas. • The need for renewal, re-imagining and re-branding • Players and management in urban re-branding.

Development Issues

GCSE Unit 2 Development Dilemmas option	GCE Unit 3 Bridging the Development Gap
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development differences e.g. urban and rural, regional differences and how they develop • Core - periphery ideas • Different approaches e.g. top-down versus bottom up • Evaluating a range of schemes in terms of their success and sustainability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measuring development • Theories and models of development • Examining a wide range of factors and players that contribute to development of lack of it • Disparities in terms of gender, region, ethnicity, religion • Evaluating a wide range of development strategies including trade, aid, investment, and a range of political perspectives on development.

Slightly different country classification systems are used at GCSE and GCE levels. GCSE Spec B uses the terms 'developed' and 'developing' country and within this is an expectation that students will be familiar with MEDC/ NIC /LEDC. GCE students needs to be aware of some additional groupings.

GCSE Specification B and GCE		Additional GCE classification
Developed "North"	More Economically Developed Country (MEDC)	G8 Countries
		OECD Countries
Developing "South"	Newly Industrialised Country (NIC)	Least Developed Country (LDC)
	Less Economically Developed Country (LEDC)	

2.4 Suggestions for Issues Based Fieldwork

Fieldwork should be integrated into Geography planning as far as possible. At both GCSE and GCE fieldwork is a requirement, as is an understanding of the uses of GIS. Fieldwork should be undertaken outside the confines of the compulsory course elements (GCSE B Unit 4 and GCE Unit 4) as far as is possible.

The ideas below link to the 'Avoid' 4 year outline in Section 2.2:

Year 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to Google Earth / Google Maps • Basics of the enquiry process (planning, methods / data collection design, data collection, analysis, presentation, conclusion and evaluation) • Mini-fieldwork enquiry based on a local issue, or even on the school grounds / immediate area. Designing simple questionnaires and environmental surveys.
Year 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • River Study (GCSE Unit 1 Option) to investigate physical processes and an enquiry question based on downstream changes in river / channel parameters possibly linked to the issue of flooding and / or flood management; use of multiple sampling points to introduce sampling / data collection site selection. • River studies have the advantage of generating a wide range of numerical data that can be used graphically and statistically, as well as having the potential for collection errors which can be useful for discussion and evaluation.

Year 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GCSE Unit 4 Controlled Assessment • Rural issues based study, task briefs published to date, such as <i>“In recent decades tourism has been the most important factor leading to changes in rural areas”</i> (June 2010-May 2011) and <i>“The prosperity of a rural area depends on the success of a range of initiatives”</i> (June 2011-May 2012) allow for a focus on issues such as conflict, the role of different players and schemes in rural prosperity, and key forces of change such as tourism. • Using GIS, in a basic way, to aid planning and analysis • More complex and detailed data collection techniques can be devised and used.
Year 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning fieldwork and research for the Unequal Spaces and Crowded Coasts options • Student input into enquiry questions; group design of data collection programme to include use of unusual and innovative fieldwork and research • Extended work on GIS as part of Unit 2; students use it to decide on the location of key surveys / data collection • Focus on investigating issues, but also on critical self-evaluation as exam questions may focus on this area.
Year 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partly independent fieldwork and research enquiry based on one of the four Enquiry Questions from A2 Unit 4 option choice e.g. cold environments • Landscape and landforms study in the Lake District or Snowdonia as part of group fieldwork. • NB some Unit 4 options e.g. Rural Tourism / Cultural Diversity / Cold Environments can all be investigated in similar locations e.g. mountains

Section 3: A skills continuum

3:1 Decision making and issues analysis skills

Issues based skills are directly assessed at GCSE and GCE:

- GCSE Unit 3 Making Geographical Decisions = 25% of the total GCSE marks
- GCE Unit 3 Section B Issues Analysis = 13% of the total GCE marks.

There are similarities between the GCE and GCSE direct assessment of issues based geography in that both are based on pre-released resources (that has a long history within Edexcel Geography). In both cases the preparation for assessment should be a joint effort between teachers (s) and students.

At GCSE level the decision making resources could be at local, regional or global scales. At GCE they are most likely to be regional in focus.

Both specifications include **key themes** which feed into the decision making and issues analysis. Where possible, these themes should be integrated into schemes of work so that students become as familiar as possible with them:

Concepts and themes	Examples of Teaching and Learning opportunities
The concept of 'players' (decision makers, stakeholders) to include individuals, groups and organisations at scales from local to global. To include the idea of conflict between players.	GCSE Unit 1 Battle for the Biosphere: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the players involved in a key issue such as deforestation • Ask students to consider the role of each players (positive / negative / neutral impact on deforestation) and their attitude to the issue. • Draw up a simple conflict matrix to identify the key conflicts.
The need for environmental sustainability and the meaning of sustainable development .	GCSE Unit 2 Development Dilemas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use two well known, but contrasting, development projects e.g. the Three Gorges Dam versus Jiko Stoves • Rather than list general advantages / disadvantages, get students to consider the projects from two sustainability perspectives i.e. environmental sustainability (eco-credentials / resources use) and sustainable development (equitable benefits, community participation, quality of life improvements)
Pressure on resources is likely to intensify in the future.	GCSE Unit 2 Population Dynamics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Population clocks, of which there are many on the internet, are a good visual way to consider resource consumption. • Use an online ecological footprint calculator to consider resource consumption combined with a population clock to consider the impact of rising populations. • Add in the idea of increasing wealth in India, China and other population power houses such as Indonesia and Nigeria; consider the joint impact of more people, who also consume more. • Links can be made to Unit 1 Battle for the Biosphere and Oceans on the Edge in terms of increased pressure of ecological resources.

<p>The idea that problems and issues have a range of potential solutions and / or management options at a range of scales from local to global.</p>	<p>It is useful to link several ideas when considering options to manage geographical problems or issues: Why - clearly define the problem / issue that needs to be solved / managed. What - identify a range of solutions that could be used. Who - which players are involved in different solutions. Where - consider the scale (local to global) that solutions could be applied at. A number of key opportunities exist across both specifications to consider a wide range of solutions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate change/ global warming management GCSE Unit 1 and AS Unit 1 • Options for managing ecosystems / biodiversity in GCSE Unit 1 and A2 Unit 3 • Options for meeting energy / resource demands in GCSE Unit 2 and A2 Unit 3 • Population management in GCSE Unit 2.
<p>Evaluation of options in order to reach, and justify, a decision.</p>	<p>Evaluation of options / solutions is very important. This is the Decision Making process:</p> <pre style="text-align: center;"> Identify the problem / issue (s) ↓ Identify possible solutions / management options ↓ Define criteria to be used to evaluate ↓ Evaluate options ↓ Reach a decision ↓ Justify decision by explaining acceptance and rejection of options. </pre> <p>The criteria used to evaluate options are important. Frequently social, economic and environmental costs/ benefits or advantages/disadvantages are used. At A2 level criteria such as the sustainability quadrant might be developed.</p>
<p>That there are a range of actions that might be chosen to tackle a geographical issue; choice of action is often influenced by the views and perceptions of player (which are often political in nature)</p>	<p>At AS and A2 level students need to consider the motivations that lie behind the attitudes of different players and their choice of action. In AS Level Unit 1 Going Global students should consider the motivations behind those involved in ethical purchasing (such as Fair Trade) and the extent to which motives are truly altruistic. Consider players such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual consumers in the west • NGOs • TNCS, who increasingly process and sell ethical goods • Producers in the developing world <p>In A2 Unit 3 Bridging the Development the issue of aid can</p>

	<p>be considered in the same way, from the standpoint of donors and recipients.</p>
<p>The there are a range of futures (business as usual, sustainable, radical) that might be 'aimed for' in relation to geographical issues.</p>	<p>At GCE level students need to consider futures in detail, but it is a concept that can be touched on at GCSE, specifically when decisions will have long term consequences such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tackling global warming • Population Policies <p>The idea of futures is essential in A2 Unit 3 when it should be considered as part of all topics. Essentially students need to ask a three part question:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What sort of future do we want? 2. How could we get there? 3. Who would the winners and losers be?
<p>Synoptic skills: developing links and 'big picture' geography.</p>	<p>Synoptic skills are an essential component of A2 Geography, but the ability to see links across different areas of Geography can be developed earlier. These links include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making links between topics • Making comparisons with one situation / case study compared to another • Linking a local / regional situation to a global one (changing scale) <p>They could be developed as part of preparation for the GCSE Unit 3 Decision Making exercise, and they must be developed in the context of preparation for the A2 Unit 3 Issues Analysis where specific synopticity is required:</p> <div data-bbox="699 1128 1289 1384" data-label="Diagram"> <pre> graph TD A((Being 'synoptic')) --> B((Use parallel examples to compare or contrast)) A --> C((Use broad themes such as sustainability)) A --> D((Bring in 'new' information from your research)) A --> E((Use models, such as Clark-Fisher or the sustainability quadrant)) </pre> </div> <p>Particular topics, over the 4 years of GCSE + GCE, lend themselves to making wider links. It is useful to briefly make these links in class, perhaps using a whole group activity of drawing up a mind map. This can be done very easily for topics which have a global focus such as climate change and global warming, development issues and energy.</p>

3.2 Examination skills and the assessment continuum.

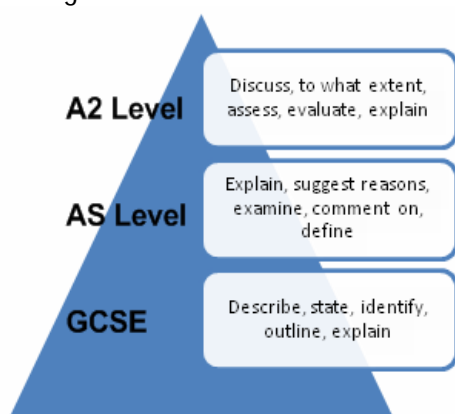
Moving through GCSE to GCE involves a change to the length of exams and the style of exam questions. These changes are summarised below:

	Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3	Unit 4
GCSE B	1 hour Short questions 1-4 marks, extended writing sections B and C up to 7 marks QWC Sections B and C	1 hour Short questions 1-4 marks, extended writing sections B and C up to 7 marks QWC Sections B and C	1 hour Short questions and extended writing. QWC in selected questions	Controlled Assessment
GCE	1 ½ hours Section A short questions up to 5 marks Section B 25 mark essay QWC Section B only	1 ¼ hours Extended writing questions of 10 and 15 marks QWC all	2 ½ hours Section A 25 mark essay style questions Section B extended writing Issues Analysis QWC all	1 ½ hours One essay style question, written as a structured report. QWC all

The longer exam papers and greater use of extended writing means candidates must develop their writing skills as they move from GCSE to GCE. Students will find the format of GCE Unit 1, Section A similar to what they were used to at GCSE but other exam questions will feel very different.

Significant practice, using past papers and mark schemes, will help students understand the demands of GCE. Some of this practice should be under timed conditions. Peer marking and use of GCE examiners reports (which contain examples of 'real' students responses) are both very useful.

A key difference between GCSE and GCE is the use of examination command words. This reflects the higher level skills which are assessed at AS and A2 level compared to GCSE and which develop over the 4 years of GCSE and GCE. The illustrative command word hierarchy below, shows how command words progress from GCSE, to AS then A2. Many good GCE students struggle with the difference between 'describe' and 'explain', so it is well worth spending time in class on command word interpretation



A common barrier to success at GCE level is a failure to address certain key words in questions. Often these are very commonly used words but they have a specific meaning in an issues based geographical context.

Examples are:

- Causes
- Consequences
- Conflicts
- Processes
- Factors

As well as focussing on command words, it is worth spending time to build student understanding of these key words.

Mark schemes, although they may look similar at GCSE and GCE, progress across the 4 years of Geography. Low tariff, non-QWC questions on GCSE Units 1-3 and AS Unit 1 are point marked. Other questions are levels marked.

The examples below show the top level band from 2 GCSE and 2 GCE mark schemes (are from Summer 2010):

GCSE Unit 2 (H)

Level 3	5-6	Structured answer. A range of strategies explained in detail and well linked to the reduction of the eco-footprint of the city. Location detail or specific examples are offered to support points. Well communicated with good use of geographical terminology, spelling, punctuation and grammar.
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GCSE Unit 3 (H) Decision Making

Level 3	5-6	Well structured, with sound use of developed reasoning to show how and why survival or economic development in central Australia is difficult. Good understanding of reasons, expressed in detail and specific reference to data e.g. rainfall or temperature extremes. Well communicated with good use of geographical terminology, and good quality spelling, punctuation and grammar.
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AS Level Unit 1

Level 4	13-15	Well-structured, detailed explanation of internal and international migrations. Trends are well-linked to globalisation. Uses appropriate geographical terms and exemplification to show understanding. Written language errors are rare.
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A2 Level Unit 3 Issues Analysis

Level 4	13-16	Carefully structured. Detailed account with a wide range of threats with a genuine evaluation of relative importance. Strong synoptic links. Explanations are always clear. Geographical terminology is used with accuracy. Grammar, punctuation and spelling errors are very rare.
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- Structure (logically organised and written) and detail are common at all levels.
- Good quality QWC is common at all levels - the last few sentences in each example focus on aspects of quality of written communication.
- At GCSE, examples feature in the Unit 2 (H) mark scheme as worthy of high credit, and in the Unit 3 decision making example explanations and links to data (i.e. the data in the Resources booklet) are required.
- At AS level a combination of detail, explanation and coverage of several different aspects of the question (internal, external, trends linked to globalisation) illustrates that AS questions are that much more complex compared to GCSE.
- The last example is from the A2 Issues Analysis where the stress is on evaluation skills and synoptic links

Students need to be made aware of how levels marking works, and how the content of the levels changes as they progress from GCSE, through AS to A2.

Section 4: Approaches in the classroom

In this section there are 3 lesson plans, all of which focus on engaging students in learning and considering geographical issues from a range of perspectives. They are offered as a starting point for development rather than as prescriptive examples.

Lesson 1: Diamond Ranking Learning objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appreciate the complex causes of geographical issues. • Evaluate the relative importance of contributing factors • Explain and justify a decision 		
Resources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One blank A3 diamond grid per group • Sheet of 9 factors to cut up (or pre-cut cards) 	Topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The example given here is based on the causes of the 2005 Niger Famine. • Any issue could be used which has multiple causes and the activity can also be used to rank solutions. 	
RISING FOOD COSTS A 100 kg bag of millet, the staple grain, sold for around US \$16 to \$24 last year but now costs more than \$44.	TAX RISES In April 05 the government, heavily dependent on donor funding, raised taxes on milk and flour, as a condition for aid from the IMF.	POVERTY Average family income in rural Niger is \$170
HOUSEHOLD INCOMES A fall in cash remittances from men who had gone to work in Cote d'Ivoire, due to nearly three years of civil war.	RAINFALL A premature end to the rainy season did even more damage, causing some areas to lose 80% of millet and sorghum crops.	POPULATION The population is growing at 2.6% per year in Niger
FOOD AID Some NGOs have criticized the government's decision to sell subsidized food for the hungry, instead of giving it away for free	SLOW RESPONSE MSF criticized the UN for what they say has been a 'slow response' to an emergency aid workers have been warning about since the end of 2004.	DESERTIFICATION 250,000 ha per year lost due to poor farming methods and erosion.
Notes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spend 5 minutes introducing the issue, and set a clear task question; in this example "Which factors contributed most to the 2005 Niger famine?" • In groups of 3 or 4, students arrange the 9 statements into the diamond grid to produce an overall ranking; allow 15 minutes for this. Encourage students to consider links between causes. • Each group should have the opportunity to explain and justify their rank order. There is no 'correct' ranking although some orders are easier to justify. 		

Lesson 2: View market-place

Learning objectives:

- Consideration of different views and perspectives
- Justification of decisions
- Appreciation of the perspectives of others.

Resources:

- 4 contrasting views; these are very easily prepared in PowerPoint and simply printed as slides.
- 4 x rough paper and a pen

Topics:

- The example used here is global warming.
- This activity works well with any controversial topic where there are polarised views such as China's one child policy, debt write-offs, giving disaster aid, wind farms etc.

4 views on global warming:

<p>View 1</p> <p>Global warming is too big a problem to deal with. The World should try and solve other problems and just 'live with' global warming.</p>	<p>View 2</p> <p>The developed world has caused global warming so it should find solutions, and pay for them.</p>
<p>View 3</p> <p>Global warming is everyone's responsibility in the developed and developing world. Individuals and governments should work towards drastically reducing their emissions now.</p>	<p>View 4</p> <p>It's not really that big a deal. Technology can be used to stop the impacts of global warming and even 'suck' the carbon dioxide out of the air. Don't worry about it.</p>

Notes:

- You will need 4 different views / perspectives on an issue; the activity work best is several of the views are a little 'over the top'
- Very briefly introduce the issue, perhaps be saying something like ' we are going to consider solutions to global warming'
- Place the 4 views in the corners of the classroom, than ask student's to walk around the room and consider each view. This will take around 5 minutes. Encourage individual consideration.
- Students should stand next to their chosen view. Allow the group next to each view 5 minutes (still standing) to write a 50 word justification of why they are standing where they are. This can be read out to the whole class and used as a basis for debate (NB it may get quite lively)

Lesson 2: Public enquiry (role play)

Learning objectives:






- Consideration of an issue in depth, from a range of perspectives
- Developing team / group work skills, and presentation skills
- Developing logical arguments

Resources:

- Classroom set out as below
- Presentation equipment (flipchart, PowerPoint)
- Enquiry question and summary of proposal (s)

Topics:

- Any topic where a change is proposed, such as new sea or flood defences, a new housing or other development, or wind farm etc.
- Topics need to be reasonably controversial and involve a range of players / stakeholders.

<p>Environmentalists</p> 	<p>Developers / Business</p> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide a question for the Public Enquiry such as '<i>Should the proposed sea defences at X be constructed</i>' 2. In their groups, give students some time to prepare a presentation. 3. Presentations should be limited to 3-5 minutes 4. Give the other groups, and the Chair group, time to formulate questions, then question the group which has just presented. 5. At the end of all presentations the Chair and Jury will need time to deliberate, before stating and explaining their decision.
<p>Local residents / groups</p> 	<p>Council / Government</p> 	
<p>Chairperson + Jury</p> 		

Notes:

- Role-play can be very effective, but sometimes it is difficult to manage and it can be very time consuming.
- It is best to keep it simple and time-constrained, and is often useful at the end of a topic when students have gained a good deal of knowledge and understanding.
- Have a maximum of 4 'players' plus a jury; if necessary put similar stakeholders into one umbrella group (as above, e.g. Environmentalists might include Greenpeace, local campaigners, National Park authorities etc) to reduce the number of people who have to speak; this will save time and keep students engaged.
- Particularly at GCSE the student acting as Chairperson will benefit from a teacher prepared 'brief' to keep them on track. Having a Chair + 2 jurors makes the 'summing up' phase easier.
- This activity works best when some time is given to groups to formulate and write down their questions after another group has presented their case, to avoid a 'free for all'.

Section 5: Useful resources

Specifications

The GCSE B and GCE specifications can be found at:

GCE: <http://www.edexcel.com/quals/gce/gce08/geography/Pages/default.aspx>

GCSE: <http://www.edexcel.com/quals/gcse/gcse09/geography/b/Pages/default.aspx>

Schemes of work

In order to help plan your 4 years course there are a number of essential resources. Adaptable schemes of work can be downloaded from the Edexcel website. These are in word format, so can be easily customised to fit the specific needs of departments.

GCE schemes of work can be found at:

<http://www.edexcel.com/quals/gce/gce08/geography/Pages/default.aspx> , under the 'Teacher Support materials' tab.

GCSE schemes of work can be found at

<http://www.edexcel.com/quals/gcse/gcse09/geography/b/Pages/default.aspx> , under the 'Teacher Support materials' tab.

Decision Making and Issues Analysis exercises:

Past papers and resources booklets for the GCSE Unit 3 decision making exercise and GCE Unit 3 Issues Analysis can be found on the websites (as above). These can be integrated into teaching / used as practice examinations. As of September 2010, those available were:

GCSE B Unit 3 Decision Making	GCE Unit 3 Section B Issues Analysis
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sample Assessment material: Housing in Gram pound • June 2010: Can Australia cope with its increasing population? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sample Assessment material: GM crops in Latin America (Techno Fix topic) • Additional Sample Assessment material: Development options for Sri Lanka (Bridging the Development Gap topic) • January 2010: The Small Gulf States (Superpower Geographies Topic) • June 2010: Biodiversity in the Pacific SIDS (Biodiversity Under Threat topic)

Other resources:

Textbooks for GCSE

- **Edexcel GCSE Geography Specification B Student Book**, by Nigel Yates, Andrew Palmer, Phil Wood, and David Flint (Edexcel).
- **Edexcel GCSE Geography Specification A Student Book**, by Nigel Yates, Andrew Palmer, Mike Witherick, and Phil Wood (Edexcel)
- **GCSE Geography for Edexcel B Students' Book** by, Bob Digby, Dave Holmes, Sue Warn, and Cameron Dunn (OUP)

Other GCSE Resources

- **Edexcel GCSE Geography A Teacher Guide: A** by Nigel Yates, Andrew Palmer, Mike Witherick, and Phil Wood (Edexcel)

- **Edexcel GCSE Geography B Teacher Guide: B** by Nigel Yates, Andrew Palmer, Mike Witherick, and Phil Wood (Edexcel)
- **Tomorrow's Geography for Edexcel GCSE Specification A (Teachers Guide)** by Mike Harcourt and Steph Warren (Edexcel)
- **GCSE Geography for Edexcel B Teacher's Handbook** by Bob Digby et al (OUP)
- **Wide world**, GCSE student magazine published by Philip Allan www.philipallan.co.uk
- **Topic Eye** GCSE level magazine style resources published by Cross Academe www.crossacademe.co.uk

Textbooks for GCE

- **Edexcel AS Geography: Student Book and Student CD-ROM** by Viv Pointon, Steph Warren, and Peter Byrne (Edexcel)
- **Edexcel A2 Geography: Student Book** by Peter Byrne, Sally Garrington, Garrett Nagle, and Viv Pointon (Edexcel)
- **Edexcel AS Geography Textbook** by Sue Warn, Cameron Dunn, Simon Oakes, and Bob Hordern (Philip Allan)
- **Edexcel A2 Geography: Textbook** by Sue Warn, Cameron Dunn, Nigel Yates, and Simon Oakes (Philip Allan)
- **AS Geography for Edexcel Students' Book** by Bob Digby, Russell Chapman, Anna King, and Catherine Hurst (OUP)
- **A2 Geography For Edexcel Students' Book** by Bob Digby, Catherine Hurst, Russell Chapman, and Dan Cowling (OUP)
- **Edexcel AS Geography: Unit 2: Geographical Investigations, Student Unit Guide** by David Holmes and Bob Hordern (Philip Allan)
- **Edexcel AS Geography: Unit 1: Global Challenges, Student Unit Guide** by Sue Warn and Cameron Dunn (Philip Allan)
- **Edexcel A2 Geography: Unit 3: Contested Planet, Student Unit Guide**, by Sue Warn and Cameron Dunn (Philip Allan)
- **Edexcel A2 Geography: Unit 4: Geographical Research, Student Unit Guide (Student Unit Guides)** by Dave Holmes and Kim Adams (Philip Allan)
- **Contemporary Case Studies** book series published by Philip Allan

Other GCE Resources

- **Edexcel Geography AS ActiveTeach Pack** by Viv Pointon, Steph Warren, and Peter Byrne (CD-ROM, Edexcel)
- **Edexcel A2 Geography Active Teach Pack** by Peter Byrne, Viv Pointon, Mr Paul Guinness, and Sally Garrington (CD-ROM, Edexcel)
- **Edexcel A2 Geography: Teacher Guide** by Sue Warn, Cameron Dunn, Nigel Yates, and Simon Oakes (Philip Allan)
- **Edexcel AS Geography: Teacher Guide** by Sue Warn, Cameron Dunn, Simon Oakes, and Bob Hordern (Philip Allan)
- **AS Geography for Edexcel Activities & Planning OXBox CD-ROM: Activities and Planning OXBox CD-ROM** by Bob Digby (OUP)
- **AS Geography for Edexcel Teacher's Handbook** by Bob Digby and Catherine Hurst (OUP)
- **A2 Geography for Edexcel Teacher's Book** by Bob Digby and Catherine Hurst (OUP)
- **Geography Review**, A-level student magazine published by Philip Allan www.philipallan.co.uk

- Geofactsheets, A-level resources published by Curriculum Press www.curriculum-press.co.uk/
- Topic Eye A-level magazine style resources published by Cross Academe www.crossacademe.co.uk
- Geofiles, A-level geography resources published by Nelson Thornes <http://www.nelsonthornes.com/wps/portal/geofile>

Appendix: Beyond GCE

Many students consider Geography, or related courses, beyond A-level when they apply to Higher Education. The number and variety of different courses which relate to Geography is very large indeed. Below is a brief (i.e. not comprehensive, please see www.ucas.ac.uk) guide to areas of Higher Education students interested in Geography might want to consider.

<p><u>Geography</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geography • Physical Geography • Human Geography 	<p>There are a very large number of general Geography course in Higher Education. Often universities offer the option of physical or human geography. Alternatively geography could be part of a Joint Honours or Combined Honours course.</p>
<p><u>Specialisms</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Geography • Social Geography • Urban Geography • Regional Geography • Biogeography • Coastal management 	<p>Many HE courses allow for specialisation in an area of Geography, often one that was studied at GCE level. Such courses allow students to study areas which particularly interest them. Some may have more specific entry requirements than more general geography courses.</p>
<p><u>GIS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geographical Information Systems • Geomatics • Surveying and Mapping Science 	<p>GIS and related courses are a growth area; they involve digital mapping and are often applied courses.</p>
<p><u>Environment</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Science • Pollution Control • Conservation 	<p>There is a large range of courses relating to environmental issues and conservation.</p>
<p><u>Geological</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geology • Earth Sciences • Geoscience • Geophysics 	<p>Geological / Earth Science courses are for those who enjoy physical geography and have a leaning towards science; they often require one or more science A-levels.</p>
<p><u>Weather and Climate</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meteorology • Climate Science 	<p>The number of courses available in this area is relatively small, and often oceanography is part of the course. Science A-levels are generally required.</p>
<p><u>Planning</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town and Country Planning • Rural / Countryside Planning • Transport Planning 	<p>Making locational decisions is key to planning, and there are a large number of planning courses some of which specialise in different types of geographical locations.</p>
<p><u>Development</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International Development • Development Studies • Regional Studies • Rural Development • Sustainable Development 	<p>Development is about improving peoples lives, and is an area of Geography that appeals to many students who have studied aspects of it at GCE. A wide range of courses are offered at HE level, some of which focus on the developing world.</p>

Additional Royal Geographical Society resources on progression and careers can be found at: <http://www.rgs.org/OurWork/Schools/CareersAndFurtherStudy/Careers+and+further+study.htm>