UNIT 4: Researching Geography

Controlled Assessment Task Brief

Student guidance on how to complete your controlled assessment for Edexcel Geography B GCSE

This advice should be given to all students when starting the controlled assessment process

Task question (completed by candidate):

Controlled assessment (CA) is project and research work, which is partially supervised by your teacher during some stages. It is designed to **measure your geographical skills**, particularly those relating to **research**, and the ability to carry out **fieldwork** and **interpret** the information you have found.

Stage 1:
Pre-fieldwork – here you will be researching you topic in the classroom or learning resource centre

Stage 2:
The fieldwork – this is going out and collecting the actual fieldwork data that will then be used for the writing-up

Stage 3:
Initial writing-up – you will start to get all of the work together and to do the aims, methods and data presentation

Stage 4:
Data analysis – here you will be processing the data to reveal and patterns and linkages in what you have found

Stage 5:
Conclusions + evaluation – a chance to summarise your findings and then to reflect on the process of controlled assessment

Your controlled assessment will be based on work that you carry out yourself or as part of a group. You will then write up and present this work into a relatively short structured report which follows **an enquiry sequence**:

1	2	3	4	5
Introduction and planning	Methods of data collection	Data presentation	Analysis and conclusions	Evaluation

INTRODUCTION and PLANNING the topic for study – (8 marks)
*Suggested time for writing-up this section – **about** 4 hours*
To get top marks you should try to:
- Provide a clear, focused statement of your aims, purpose and location, of the issue you will study and include appropriate maps
- Justify your choice /context of study in your introduction (this may be linked to a theory or model or geographical process)
- Use additional secondary data and research to add depth to your study

METHODS of data collecting (7 marks)
*Suggested time for writing-up this section – **about** 4 hours*
To get top marks you should try to:
- Include a clear description of the methods used to collect and record data (this may include information about sample sizes etc)
- Explain and justify the methods used to collect and record data (linked to the task)
- Include some GIS (e.g. Google maps etc)
- At the end of the data collection process, collate and sort the information relevant to your study

Data presentation (15 marks)
*Suggested time for writing-up this section – **about** 5 hours*
To get top marks you should try to:
- Include a range of appropriate data-presentation methods (2-3) which are appropriate for your study
- Present your data techniques in a neat and clear style (e.g. axes correctly labelled etc)
- Include some GIS (e.g. Google maps with proportional mini-pies / bars overlaid etc on top)

You will also get marked on *Quality of Written Communication* as part of this section, even though it applies to the whole controlled assessment exercise – so:
- Provide an organised and well-structured report showing the sequence of enquiry
- Have few grammar, punctuation and spelling errors in your report
- Include a clear and accurate use of geographical terminology

Analysis and conclusions (14 marks)
*Suggested time for writing-up this section – **about** 5 hours*
To get top marks you should try to:
- Analysed your data in detail using appropriate techniques. This may mean identify links and connections between your data as well as including links to geographical theory
- Provide clear, relevant and focused conclusions including evidence to support the statements
- Comment on the wider geographical significance your study, i.e. why it is important
- Link back to the original aims of the investigation

Evaluation (6 marks)
*Suggested time for writing-up this section – **about** 2 hours*
To get top marks you should try to:
- Include a review and evaluation of the whole fieldwork process
- Identify any problems encountered with the methods.
- Comment on the accuracy of the results and the reliability of the conclusions.
- A brief discussion of how things could be improved if the work were to be repeated

General advice

There are two levels of control during the controlled assessment:

Limited Level of Control	High Level of Control
(1) Planning and introduction, (2) Methods of data collection, (3) Data presentation	(4) Analysis and conclusions, (5) Evaluation
Setting can be a range of locations (including resources centre etc for research purposes). You can work individually or in small groups. There is no need for direct supervision – a research philosophy should be encouraged. Fieldwork is also included under limited control. You will be starting the write-up here, up to and including the presentation of results, e.g. graphs, diagrams etc.	Stricter requirements for work to be formally supervised. Work must be kept securely in a locked room / filing cabinet or electronically under a secure system. Work cannot be taken home. You must work individually and cannot communicate with each other regarding the task. Computers can be used, but teachers need to restrict the use of the internet to just data processing / analysis / GIS. New research material cannot be included from the internet.

Remember -
- You may not communicate with other candidates about the content of your work during the high level of control period.

- Your teacher will give you guidance on the amount of time you should spend on each section of the controlled assessment process. Should you need additional time, then his can be requested.

- You are advised **not to exceed the guidance of approximately 2000 words, although there is no formal penalty for going over length**. You may use a variety of presentation methods such as sketch maps, diagrams, graphs and photographs. You need to show evidence of simple GIS. Your answer may be hand written, word processed and include other types of presentation e.g. PowerPoint, video etc.

- Quality of written communication will be assessed in your work.

- The maximum mark for this paper is 50.

Mark Scheme

▰▰▰ Assessment criterion a – Planning

Mark range	Descriptor
0	No outline of the purpose of study or location.
1-3	Limited outline only of the issue to be studied; location may be absent or unclear.
	Limited introduction, context, framework and rationale are absent or wholly incomplete. Use of secondary data may be absent.
4-6	A satisfactory statement to identify the issue to be studied, including aims and location.
	A satisfactory introduction providing some geographical background and purpose. Likely to reference to secondary data and research.
7-8	A clear, focused statement of aims, purpose and location, of the issue to be studied, including appropriate maps.
	Some justification for study provided in the introduction, for example an attempt to contextualise fieldwork and research. Student uses secondary data and research to inform study.

▰▰▰ Assessment criterion b – Methods of data collection

Mark range	Descriptor
0	No description of methods of data collection.
1-2	Very limited description of data-collection methods, no explanation of choice of methods. The evidence for data collection is absent or extremely limited and the use of GIS is not included.
3-5	Satisfactory description of data-collection methods (may include some explanation at top of band). The evidence for data collection is sometimes appropriate and will include the use of GIS, which may not be relevant.
6-7	Clear description (and possibly some explanation) of methods used to collect and record data. Expect some justification for maximum marks. There is evidence of data collection which is linked to the task and GIS is used well.

▰▰▰ Assessment criterion c* – Data presentation and report production

Mark range	Descriptor
0	No data presentation techniques have been used and the report is not structured.
1-3	Very limited range or only partial attempts to present data in a meaningful way. Limited to very basic techniques. These may be incomplete, with no attention to detail and finishing. GIS is not included.
	Very limited organisation and structure, and weak style of writing. Abundant spelling and grammatical errors. Geographical terminology likely to be absent.
4-7	Limited range of sometimes appropriate techniques to present data. Errors in terms of technical correctness and finishing. GIS is included but may not be relevant.
	Organisation and structure likely to be satisfactory; some errors in spelling and punctuation. Work is legible. Use of geographical terminology has been attempted.
8-11	Uses some range of appropriate data presentation methods, although they may not always be technically correct. The presentation techniques are nearly always clear and complete. The use of GIS is relevant and clear.
	A generally well-organised and structured piece of work linked to the enquiry sequence. There are few grammar, punctuation and spelling errors and use of geographical terminology is generally accurate.
12-15	A good range of appropriate data-presentation methods which are fit for purpose. The techniques are neat and clear, possibly including some original ideas. The use of GIS is clear and supports the report well.
	An organised and well-structured report showing the sequence of enquiry followed. Grammar, punctuation and spelling errors are almost non-existent. Clear and accurate use of geographical terminology.

* Opportunity for students to be assessed on quality of written communication strands:

i)   ensure that text is legible and that spelling, punctuation and grammar are accurate so that meaning is clear

ii) select and use a form and style of writing appropriate to purpose and to complex subject matter

iii) organise information clearly and coherently, using specialist vocabulary when appropriate.

Assessment criterion d – Analysis and conclusions

Mark range	Descriptor
0	There is no evidence of any data analysis. A conclusion has not been attempted.
1-3	Data analysis is very basic and highly restricted. There is no linkage to geographical theory. A very limited attempt which forms a short and very basic conclusion. Comments are brief and unfinished. Original aims tend to be overlooked or ignored.
4-6	Partial data analysis which is brief and descriptive only. Connections between data sets have not been explored. Limited linkage to any geographical theory. A basic conclusion is attempted, using generalised and simplistic comments. There is limited linkage to original aims.
7-9	Data is analysed in a satisfactory manner, but tends to be more descriptive than analytical. There is a limited attempt to identify possible geographical connections between data collected. Plausible conclusions are drawn, but there is somewhat limited evidence used to support findings.
10-12	Data is analysed using some analytical tools. Links and connections between data sets may be identified. There may be some linkage to relevant geographical theory. Conclusions are generally clear and relevant, with some linkage back to the original aims of the investigation. Some evidence is used to support conclusions, possibly recognising their wider geographical significance.
13-14	Data is analysed in detail using appropriate processing tools. Some links and connections are identified between data presented. Expect linkage to geographical theory (where relevant). Conclusions are clear, relevant and focused. Evidence is used to support conclusions. Expect comment on the wider geographical significance of the work. There are links to the original aims of the investigation.

Assessment criterion e – Evaluation

Mark range	Descriptor
0	There is no attempt to either review or evaluate the work.
1-2	There is only a limited or partial attempt to either review or evaluate the work. There is no comment on the validity of the task question set.
3-4	The work is reviewed/evaluated in a satisfactory manner. There is some attempt to evaluate the outcomes with respect to the task question. Expect some of the limitations of the evidence to be recognised.
5-6	A reasonable range of limitations of the evidence are considered. There is good reviewing and/or evaluation of the process and findings. The student clearly attempts to link the findings from the work to the task question. A reasonable range of limitations of the evidence are considered.