2020 Geography Subject Assessment Advice

Overview

Subject assessment advice, based on the 2020 assessment cycle, gives an overview of how students performed in their school and external assessments in relation to the learning requirements, assessment design criteria, and performance standards set out in the relevant subject outline. They provide information and advice regarding the assessment types, the application of the performance standards in school and external assessments, and the quality of student performance.

Teachers should refer to the subject outline for specifications on content and learning requirements, and to the subject operational information for operational matters and key dates.

School Assessment

Assessment Type 1: Geographical Skills and Application

Students undertake four tasks for Geographical Skills and Applications to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of geographical concepts and to examine geographical features, patterns, and processes.

Tasks for this assessment type should be to a maximum of 4000 words in total (or 24-minutes), and teachers have discretion in allocating word/time limits to individual tasks.

Schools to take note of the change to the Analysis and Evaluation specific features that were made in 2020.

AE1 Insightful analysis of the complex interactions between, and interdependence of, people and environmental, social, *and/or* economic factors

AE2 Comprehensive analysis and evaluation of information to determine possible outcomes, make justifiable and ethical recommendations, form conclusions, *and/or* solve problems.

The more successful responses commonly:

* used a range of spatial technologies, photographs, graphs and maps that were accurately annotated, labelled using a diversity of methods which supported in-depth analysis to form conclusions
* conveyed a range of skills in the tasks particularly the application of geographical concepts (e.g. understanding of drivers of globalisation, population models and processes) and choosing multimodel presentations (e.g. movie clips and screencasts) as a method to enhance the analysis of data and presentation as opposed to just knowledge from research
* used recent research findings to incorporate e.g. primary data in an area dominated by secondary data particularly to back up the generalisation
* used a wide variety of examples in case studies (including personalised examples) or specific different countries to explain change over time using animated age pyramids (or for globalisation and climate change using Gapminder and Worldmapper) to demonstrate comprehensive knowledge and understanding
* used innovative ways such as GIS maps to support analysis and flow diagrams to show the development of ideas
* provided students with choice within the task design and allowed them to address fewer criteria which led to greater depth in analysis
* produced multi-column responses with extensive annotations on broadsheets in a sophisticated manner while still demonstrating comprehensive knowledge and/or insightful analysis
* tackled the task with clear and concise expression and used relevant source materials to highlight their findings.

The less successful responses commonly:

* limited use of secondary data to support findings leading to limited analysis and evaluation
* diagrams and images were not referred to, integrated to the explanation, acknowledged or annotated
* lacked structure and clear purpose (e.g. presentations do not address or demonstrate learning and the use of PowerPoint was not effectively utilised)
* lacked analysis of geographic issues which led to unclear conclusions and recommendations
* were descriptive with limited links to processes that affected the quality of analysis which reduced the opportunity to demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of geographical concepts and knowledge
* tasks that were lock stepped with limited ways for students to demonstrate their learning
* used questionable and missing resources not reflected in the bibliography
* used of paper broadsheets which at times were unreadable photos rather than electronic infographics.

Assessment Type 2: Fieldwork Report

Students undertake one individual fieldwork report with a focus on a local topic or an issue of personal interest. They collect and analyse primary data using a wide range of data-collection techniques. Students integrate this data using visual representations and may support this with information from secondary sources. They analyse patterns and geographical concepts from the data they have collected and may make recommendations based on their data analysis.

The fieldwork report should be to a maximum of 2000 words and may be written or in oral or multimodal format.

Schools to take note of the change to the Analysis and Evaluation specific features that were made in 2020.

AE1 Insightful analysis of the complex interactions between, and interdependence of, people and environmental, social, *and/or* economic factors.

AE2 Comprehensive analysis and evaluation of information to determine possible outcomes, make justifiable and ethical recommendations, form conclusions, *and/or* solve problems.

The more successful responses commonly:

* made a clear statement about whether they were working with a question or a hypothesis and then addressed this throughout the report and in the final summary
* used a range of fieldwork data presentation techniques such as field sketches, digital mapping tools, graphical representations, annotated graphs and images which were well-integrated
* included a wide range of fieldwork methods from the downloadable apps, e.g. wind speed, light and sound to bin counts quadrants, reliable bi-polar exercises, transects, interviews and surveys and compaction tests
* included hand-drawn spatial representations of data that showed a real change in a range of forms, e.g. time and space and on occasion multi-layered
* included at least some measure of background geographical theory
* integrated data effectively with analysis to support findings with detailed methodology, a range of visuals to highlight interactions between the social, economic and/ or environmental
* used a diversity of secondary sources to support quantitative and qualitative primary findings
* used sophisticated spatial representations/technologies of data to provide context and applied geographical models or concepts to the location to plot data and present evidence in the form of sophisticated analysis.

The less successful responses commonly:

* did not make a clear statement or refer to the questions and/ or hypothesis throughout and in the final summary/conclusion
* had an over-reliance on secondary data and were unclear on the specific methodology of the primary data collection methods
* underutilised the word count
* were descriptive in analysis and/ or lacked overall findings or conclusions or missed the opportunity to provide realistic recommendations
* used basic fieldwork methodologies, e.g. did not include location map(s) to show specific points of data collection, relied too heavily on secondary maps rather than creating maps and graphs from own data
* lacked originality as students followed a template that scaffolded fieldwork and restricted students from achieving the highest levels
* some fieldwork reports were more akin to the Issues Analysis from the previous subject outline (or social analyses) that limited both in the application of fieldwork skills (data collection) and GIS
* limited use of graphs and annotations as ways of displaying fieldwork techniques with a reliance on photographs and observations that limited analysis.

External Assessment

Assessment Type 3: Examination

Students undertake one 2-hour examination. The examination has two sections: Section 1 focusing on geographical skills and Section 2 on Topic 1: Ecosystems and People and Topic 3: Population Change.

Students use a range of geographical skills to interpret written and visual materials, including maps, and apply these skills in unfamiliar contexts.

The more successful responses commonly:

* used a variety of case studies and examples effectively to illustrate explanations, e.g. pertaining to various types of migration
* referred to source material accurately when analysing information
* recognised the command terms and provided detailed explanations that influenced the quality of the answers
* had a clear understanding of what ecosystem and services were and able to explain the services
* chose and provided a rationale for fieldwork techniques that related specifically to the selected hypothesis as opposed to any geographic fieldwork techniques
* understood that biocapacity and population are not factors, as the question asked for a response to reasons for a high EF per capita
* provided an evaluation/conclusion to some of the extended response questions
* provided both positive and negative impacts on countries of origin when a population moves
* chose a position for the station adjacent to the train line and considered social and topographical advantages with spatial elements often used to discuss limitations (Question 3b(i))
* understood the difference between large and small scale (Question 3c(ii))
* found a range of examples from the sources and topographical map to discuss the degree of connectivity (Question 4)
* understood points could be connected to make an isoline map (Question 5a) and outlined the relationship between higher temperatures found in the centre of the city and the lower values in areas of vegetation (Question 5b)
* created a straightforward hypothesis related to the impact of tourist activity in the park and discussed appropriate field techniques such as interviewing, surveying and field sketching (Questions 6a and b)
* connected human benefits to ecosystem services (Question 7)
* discussed explicitly the differences in distances covered due to country size and renewable energy versus fossil fuel use (Question 8)
* saw urbanisation had expanded and stated directions of growth (Question 9a) and understood that greater urban population required more food to be grown (Question 9b)
* recognised the overall improvement in developed and developing countries from 1975–2019 and provided various reasons for the changes (Question 10)
* focused on the country of origin and provided both negatives (e.g. brain drain, loss of young male workers) and positives (female empowerment) using case studies (Question 11a)
* provided an accurate definition of forced and voluntary migration and supported with specific examples (Question 11b).

The less successful responses commonly:

* did not refer to both aspects of the question, e.g. described one change in distribution without referring to maps
* did not pick up on the per capita element and referenced ideas, e.g. large ecological footprint due to the size of the population
* focused on one component, e.g. biodiversity in ecosystem services in wetlands (Question 7)
* lacked an understanding of the different types and purposes of maps (e.g. isoline vs choropleth)
* did not read questions in full (e.g. questions asked for two answers as opposed to one; question asked for a site on a disused railway, but the student chose any site evidence on a map)
* responded to an ‘evaluate’ question without referring to limitations
* did not distinguish or understand the differences between:
* fieldwork techniques (primary data collection) and general research (secondary sources)
* ecosystem functions and ecosystem resources
* ecological footprint and biocapacity
* landcover is both natural vegetation and urban built
* country of origin and country of destination
* large and small scale.
* lacked responses linked to case studies that led to generic responses
* did not read the question and failed to find a position for the station adjacent to the train line (Question 3b(i))
* did not make use of the range of sources and failed to recognise limitations associated with the airport on the island
* referred to research as a fieldwork technique (Question 6b)
* lacked understanding of what ecological footprint was made up of and failed to see that the source depicted GHA/person (Question 8)
* unable to connect between greater urbanisation and the need to supply them with agricultural products (Question 9b)
* unable to provide adequate reasons for changes to life expectancy between 1975 and 2019 for developing and developed countries (Question 10)
* discussed country or region of the destination rather than the origin (Question 11a)
* confused between forced and voluntary situations by not providing an accurate definition of terminologies (Question 11b).