Edexcel GCSE Geography A

Fieldwork ideas and contexts for Unit 4 controlled assessment: Tasks for 2014 submission only.

This document provides a list of possible fieldwork and research ideas for the **Edexcel GCSE Geography A** tasks for **2014** submission only. These are intended as possible examples only – not in any way a 'must do' type list, nor do they represent approved titles/fieldwork. Some ideas may work well in some contexts/locations; in other instances they may be impractical, for instance, due to the size of the cohort. Students should be encouraged to think up their own ideas, whilst supported by teachers, as part of the initial Task Contextualisation and Data Decisions for which there is a suggested time allocation of 3 hours.

Remember that more support is available via Ask the Expert free service and through the Edexcel Communities site (accessed via the Geography home page).

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THEME: Approaches to local sustainable development

Task Question: Investigate the effectiveness of your chosen council in implementing its low carbon policy.

Specification link

This Task Question refers to Topic 1 Challenges for the Planet; 7.1d The causes, effects and responses to climate change; The responses to climate change.

Task contextualisation

Teachers are expected to contextualise (or localise) student investigations by using the Edexcel Task Question as a basis from which to produce an appropriate question or hypothesis that can be investigated at a local scale. In reality, this may mean adding the name of a real place to the task.

It is suggested that this Task Question is focused on a small area where a number of management approaches are in use, allowing detailed primary data collection during a single day visit. For this Task Question, a suitable sized area might be the centre of a small town, or a selected region within a London Borough.

This Task Question therefore might be contextualised in the following way: How effective is South Oxfordshire in implementing its low carbon policy in the centre of Henley-on-Thames? Alternatively: How effective is Camden Council in implementing its low carbon policy in the St Pancras and King's Cross area?

Statements regarding the specific location, and detailed location maps, will help to put the task into its geographical context.

Suggested methods – secondary data collection

Appropriate secondary data must be collected as part of the task taking process. For this Task Question, relevant secondary data might include:

- General background information, for example publications by the Department of Energy and Climate Change https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/reducing-the-uk-s-greenhouse-gas-emissions-by-80-by-2050
- Information about specific council policies can be obtained from directly contacting the council or from websites such as Sustainable Environment Strategy 2010-2020 www.wokingham.gov.uk; http://www.oxford.gov.uk/lowcarbonoxford
- Some councils provide a review of the implementation of their policies http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/lgsl/451-500/496_carbon_reduction.aspx

Such reports, as well as being an excellent source of secondary data, may also suggest ideas for primary data collection.

Suggested methods – primary data collection

The following are suggestions and intended as guidance only. The actual data collected and the methods which are used will depend on the selected location and the sub-questions relating to the Task Question developed by the Centre or the individual student.

- A survey of low carbon initiatives within the selected area. This might involve marking the schemes onto a base map of the area. Features such as LED street lights, solar panels, electric car charging points, well signed walking routes and the provision of cycle hire, cycle routes and secure cycle parks are some of the features which might be included.
- Well annotated field sketches of the area/specific schemes.
- Well annotated photographs of the specific schemes.
- Questionnaires. The questions asked will be dependent on the policies of the selected council but might include transport choices, loft insolation and amounts of food waste.
- Interviews with representatives from the selected council.

Health and safety

The specification requires that all centres must comply with the new requirements (2011) of relevant legislation and codes of practice, including:

- the Department for Education health and safety guidance for schools http://www.education.gov.uk/aboutdfe/advice/f00191759/departmental-advice-on-health-and-safety-for-schools
- the Health and Safety executive – school trips and outdoor learning activities http://www.hse.gov.uk/services/education/school-trips.pdf.

Students must carry out risk assessments as part of the Controlled Assessment process. This might form part of the preparation for fieldwork, for example by using Google Maps (secondary data) to assess likely hazards and risks. Alternatively, field sketches and photographs from the actual data collection process might be annotated as part of the risk assessment process.

THEME: River processes, landforms and flooding

Task Question: Investigate how and why channel characteristics vary across your chosen river with distance downstream.

Specification link

This Task Question refers to Topic 2 River Landscapes; Section 2.1 C; Change in characteristics (width, depth, velocity, discharge and gradient) of a river and its valley from source to mouth.

Task contextualisation

Teachers are expected to contextualise (or localise) student investigations by using the Edexcel Task Question as a basis from which to produce an appropriate question or hypothesis that can be investigated at a local scale. In reality, this may mean adding the name of a real place to the task.

For example, this Task Question might be contextualised in the following way: An investigation of how and why channel characteristics vary across the River Holford, Quantock Hills, Somerset (focusing on the river section from the source to the Hodderscombe confluence).

Statements regarding the specific location, and detailed location maps, will help to put the task into its geographical context.

Suggested methods – secondary data collection

Appropriate secondary data must be collected as part of the task taking process. For this Task Question, relevant secondary data might include:

- Heights above sea level, river valley width and gradient from Ordnance Survey maps. This information might be used to construct a long profile of the section of river investigated. (This would cover the demands of both the use of secondary data and provide a suitable data presentation technique.)
- Local geology (rock type variation downstream) from a geological map, for example, http://www.bgs.ac.uk/discoveringGeology/geologyOfBritain/viewer.html
- Information from a GIS system such as Google Earth, for example, evidence given by located photographs of the selected river or river valley.

Suggested methods – primary data collection

The following are suggestions and intended as guidance only. The actual data collected and the methods which are used will depend on the sub-questions relating to the Task Question developed by the Centre or the individual student.

- Selection of a number of sites downstream and marking these on a base map. It may prove impractical, in view of time restrictions, to investigate a total river's length - in which case a suitable section of the river's course should be chosen. The investigation sites might be randomly selected or decided upon by another sampling method, such as systematic sampling. (Note the selection of sites may be influenced by the availability of access to the river and health and safety issues.)
- Measuring the width of the river channel at each site. This might involve taking a series of measurements and obtaining an average.
- Measuring the river depth at a number of points across the river channel (systematic sampling).
- Measuring the wetted perimeter at each site to establish channel shape and channel efficiency.
- Comparing the degree of bed roughness across sites downstream.

The Field Studies Council provides some excellent guidelines, see: http://www.geography-fieldwork.org/riverfieldwork/downstream_changes/stage1.htm.

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- the Health and Safety executive – school trips and outdoor learning activities http://www.hse.gov.uk/services/education/school-trips.pdf.

Students must carry out risk assessments as part of the Controlled Assessment process. This might form part of the preparation for fieldwork, for example by using Google Maps (secondary data) to assess likely hazards and risks. Alternatively, field sketches and photographs from the actual data collection process might be annotated as part of the risk assessment process.

THEME: Coastal processes, landforms and flooding

Task Question: Investigate the need to use different approaches to defend a stretch of coast.

Specification link

This Task Question refers to Topic 1 Coastal Landscapes; Section 1.3 Coastal management.

Task contextualisation

Teachers are expected to contextualise (or localise) student investigations by using the Edexcel Task Question as a basis from which to produce an appropriate question or hypothesis that can be investigated at a local scale. In reality, this may mean adding the name of a real place to the task.

It is suggested that this Task Question is focused onto a small area where a number of management approaches are in use, allowing detailed primary data collection during a single day visit.

This Task Question might be contextualised in the following way: An investigation of the reasons for using different coastal management schemes to manage the coast at Minehead, Somerset.

Statements regarding the specific location, and detailed location maps, will help to put the task into its geographical context.

Suggested methods – secondary data collection

Appropriate secondary data must be collected as part of the task taking process. For this Task Question, relevant secondary data might include:

- General background information covering the need for coastal defences, for example, http://chartingprogress.defra.gov.uk/feeder/Section_3.2_Coastal%20Defence.pdf
- Information about various methods of coastal defence, for example, http://www.geography.learnontheinternet.co.uk/topics/coastal_management.htm
- Details of specific coastal defence schemes, for example at Eastbourne, Sussex, http://www.eastbourne.gov.uk/EasysiteWeb/getresource.axd?AssetID=2875&type=full&servicetype=Inline
- Local geology (rock type variation along the selected stretch of coast) using a geological map, for example, http://www.bgs.ac.uk/discoveringGeology/geologyOfBritain/viewer.html
- Information from a GIS system such as Google Earth.

Suggested methods – primary data collection

The following are suggestions and intended as guidance only. The actual data collected and the methods which are used will depend on the selected location and the sub-questions relating to the task question developed by the Centre or the individual student.

- Identification of methods (approaches) used to defend the selected stretch of coastline. These might be marked on a large scale base map or recorded using annotated photographs/field sketches, for example annotated field sketches of a particular feature such as a sea wall.
- Photographs, for example of the schemes, erosion and information boards. The location and orientation of each photograph should be recorded.
- The type of waves (constructive/destructive) - this can be obtained from counting wave frequency - destructive waves or a frequent wave period can indicate erosion, so providing a reason for management.
- The direction of LSD - indicated by the build-up of sediment along groynes - which may suggest management to protect the beach and to dissipate the impact of wave action.
- Observations of sand dunes (height/extent/location) - these might be protected (boardwalks, restricting access, re-planting) and/or replenished to help reduce erosion/ provide habitats.

The Field Studies Council provides some excellent guidelines, see:

http://www.geography-fieldwork.org/coastfieldwork/coastal_management/stage1.htm.

Health and safety

The specification requires that all centres must comply with the new requirements (2011) of relevant legislation and codes of practice, including:

- the Department for Education health and safety guidance for schools http://www.education.gov.uk/aboutdfe/advice/f00191759/departmental-advice-on-health-and-safety-for-schools
- the Health and Safety executive – school trips and outdoor learning activities http://www.hse.gov.uk/services/education/school-trips.pdf

Students must carry out risk assessments as part of the Controlled Assessment process. This might form part of the preparation for fieldwork, for example by using Google Maps (secondary data) to assess likely hazards and risks. Alternatively, field sketches and photographs from the actual data collection process might be annotated as part of the risk assessment process.

THEME: Changing land use in urban areas

Task Question: Investigate how and why your chosen urban area has changed over recent decades.

Specification link

This Task Question refers to Topic 2 Settlement Change; Section 2.2 Changing land use in urban areas.

What is meant by recent decades?

This refers to changes that have taken place in the selected urban area over the last thirty years, i.e. since the early 1980s.

Task contextualisation

Teachers are expected to contextualise (or localise) student investigations by using the Edexcel Task Question as a basis from which to produce an appropriate question or hypothesis that can be investigated at a local scale. In reality, this may mean adding the name of a real place to the task.

If an extensive area is selected, such as a major urban centre like London or a borough within London, it is recommended that the Task Question is adjusted to refer to a smaller area, allowing focused primary data collection during a single day visit.

For example, the Task Question might be contextualised in the following way: An investigation of how and why the Lower Lea Valley (an area affected by the construction of the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park), East London has changed over recent decades.

A second example might be: An investigation of how and why the Bullring area of Birmingham has changed over recent decades.

Statements regarding the specific location, and detailed location maps, will help to put the task into its geographical context.

Suggested methods – secondary data collection

Examples of the type of sites for obtaining secondary data are given below:

- The Lea Valley (London) http://legacy.london.gov.uk/mayor/planning/docs/lowerleavalley-pt1.pdf
- Regeneration and development in the Kings Cross area, London http://www.kingscross.co.uk/
- Regeneration in Birmingham http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/regeninfoexchange

- A short summary of developments and changes in Norwich http://www.norwich1.com/history_4.htm
- Some of the above sites provide both excellent information about the changes during redevelopment and also use GIS, for example http://www.kingscross.co.uk/the-development
- Population data to explain, for example, housing developments in the selected area http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/census/2011/census-data/index.html
- Information from a GIS system such as Google Earth.

Suggested methods – primary data collection

The following are suggestions and intended as guidance only. The actual data collected and the methods which are used will depend on the sub-questions relating to the Task Question developed by the Centre or the individual student.

The Task Question can be subdivided into two sections:

- How the chosen urban area has changed over recent decades.
- Why these changes have occurred.

How the chosen urban area has changed over recent decades

- A land use/building survey of the selected area, which might be located onto a base map, showing some or all the features that have been changed or added within the time scale. These might include new housing developments, pedestrianised zones, one way streets, by-passes, shopping malls and new car parks, out of town retail parks or buildings which have changed in use or are being regenerated.
- Annotated sketch maps and/or field sketches of the changes.
- Annotated photographs to show the main changes.
- Interviews with planning authorities or the group responsible for the development, such as the King's Cross Central Limited Partnership.

Why has the chosen urban area changed over recent decades?

Much of the relevant data might come from secondary sources. However, the following could also be used:

- Questionnaires/interviews with local planning authorities or the groups responsible for redevelopment.
- Questionnaires asking local residents and business users the reasons for urban change.

Health and safety

The specification requires that all centres must comply with the new requirements (2011) of relevant legislation and codes of practice, including:

- the Department for Education health and safety guidance for schools the Department for Education health and safety guidance for schools http://www.education.gov.uk/aboutdfe/advice/f00191759/departmental-advice-on-health-and-safety-for-schools
- the Health and Safety executive – school trips and outdoor learning activities http://www.hse.gov.uk/services/education/school-trips.pdf.

Students must carry out risk assessments as part of the Controlled Assessment process. This might form part of the preparation for fieldwork, for example by using Google Maps (secondary data) to assess likely hazards and risks. Alternatively, field sketches and photographs from the actual data collection process might be annotated to as part of the risk assessment process.

THEME: Effects of tourism

Task Question: Investigate how and why there is a need to use different strategies to manage tourism in your chosen location.

Specification link

This Task Question refers to Topic 5 A Tourist's World; Section 5.3 Impacts of the tourist industry.

Task contextualisation

Teachers are expected to contextualise (or localise) student investigations by using the Edexcel Task Question as a basis from which to produce an appropriate question or hypothesis that can be investigated at a local scale. In reality, this may mean adding the name of a real place to the task.

If an extensive area is selected, such as a National Park or a major urban centre, it is recommended that the Task Question is adjusted to refer to a small area, allowing focused primary data collection during a single day visit.

For example, the Task Question might be contextualised in the following way: An investigation of how and why there is a need to use different strategies to manage tourism in Dovedale, the Peak District.

Statements regarding the specific location, and detailed location maps, will help to put the task into its geographical context.

Suggested methods – secondary data collection

Appropriate secondary data must be collected as part of the task taking process. For this Task Question, relevant secondary data might include:

- General background information, for example tourism in the New Forest National Park http://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk/downloads/file/323/fact_sheet_1-key_facts_and_figures
- Annual visitor numbers, for example figures for a 'honey pot' such as Bath http://visitbath.co.uk/media/information-sheets/btp-and-tourism-industry
- Seasonal variations in visitor numbers, for example for Windsor http://www.windsor.gov.uk/dbimgs/VMM%20Review%20v4(1).pdf
- The management of tourism, such as path restoration in the Lake District, for example http://www.lakedistrict.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/170473/path_erosion_factsheet.pdf
- Information from a GIS system such as Google Earth, which might provide located photographs of the selected location.

Suggested methods – primary data collection

The following are suggestions and intended as guidance only. The actual data collected and the methods which are used will depend on the sub-questions relating to the Task Question developed by the Centre or the individual student.

The Task Question can be subdivided into two sections:

- **Why** there is a need to manage tourism in the selected site.
- **How** this management is achieved.

Why there is a need to manage tourism

- A survey of the tourist attractions of the area, which might be located on a base map or recorded by annotated photographs/field sketches.
- Pedestrian and/or vehicle counts to establish any congested areas.
- Evidence of environmental pollution, for example carrying out litter surveys.
- Evidence of footpath erosion at rural 'honeypot' locations.

How is tourism managed?

- Provision of tourist information centres and information boards.
- Evidence of one way streets, yellow line or other parking restrictions, car/coach park provision and 'park and ride' facilities to manage traffic flows and reduce congestion during the peak tourist season.
- Pedrestianised zones, town trails and pedestrian based signage to help prevent congestion in the vicinity of the main attractions.
- Environmental management, such as sufficient litterbins/dog waste bins and resulting lack of rubbish and evidence of street cleaning, investigated by using litter and/or environmental surveys.
- Evidence of footpath management, such as paving or other surfaces to reduce the impact of erosion.

Health and safety

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- the Health and Safety executive – school trips and outdoor learning activities http://www.hse.gov.uk/services/education/school-trips.pdf.

Students must carry out risk assessments as part of the Controlled Assessment process. This might form part of the preparation for fieldwork, for example by

using Google Maps (secondary data) to assess likely hazards and risks. Alternatively, field sketches and photographs from the actual data collection process might be annotated as part of the risk assessment process.

THEME: Changes in the rural landscape

Task Question: Investigate how and why rural communities have changed over recent decades.

Specification link

Topic 2 Settlement Change; Section 2.1b Factors affecting settlements; Changes to rural communities caused by: (i) counter-urbanisation, (ii) the depopulation of remote rural areas.

The demographic, social, economic and environmental changes to rural communities caused by counter-urbanisation and the depopulation of remote rural areas should be studied through examples.

Task contextualisation

Teachers are expected to contextualise (or localise) student investigations by using the Edexcel Task Question as a basis from which to produce an appropriate question or hypothesis that can be investigated at a local scale. In reality, this may mean adding the name of a real place to the task.

What is meant by recent decades?

This refers to changes that have taken place in the selected rural communities over the last thirty years, i.e. since the early 1980s.

Defining rural communities

Rural communities include a town and its fringe; villages; or hamlets and isolated dwellings; with a resident population of less than 10,000 people per hectare grid square (at the time of the 2001 Census).

As the Task Question states the need to investigate rural communit*ies*, i.e. more than one community, it is suggested that investigation refers to a small area such as a small rural market town and its surrounding zone, two villages or two to three hamlets where a number of changes have occurred, allowing detailed primary data collection during a single day visit.

Statements regarding the specific location, and detailed location maps, will help to put the task into its geographical context.

Suggested methods – secondary data collection

Appropriate secondary data must be collected as part of the task taking process. For this Task Question, relevant secondary data might include:

- A good resource which provides information about the loss of services and other general trends in rural areas http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110303145243/http://www.ruralcommunities.gov.uk/files/sotcupdate_market_towns.pdf
- Census data (important for demographic changes and economic data) http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/census/2011/census-data/index.html
- Specific sites such as information about the accessibility and economic base of Castleton: http://www.derbyshireguide.co.uk/travel/castleton.htm

These reports, as well as being an excellent source of secondary data, may also suggest ideas for primary data collection.

Centres might also consider contacting local museums/historical groups.

Suggested methods – primary data collection

The following are suggestions and intended as guidance only. The actual data collected and the methods which are used will depend on the selected location and the sub-questions relating to the Task Question developed by the Centre or the individual student.

The Task Question can be subdivided into two sections:

- How the chosen rural communities have changed over recent decades.
- Why these changes have occurred.

How the chosen rural communities have changed over recent decades

Collecting primary data on all the issues mentioned in the specification might prove to be too demanding to complete during a day visit. Therefore it is suggested that centres concentrate on the primary data most appropriate for the selected locations.

Counter-urbanisation

- A land use/building survey of the selected area to identify new housing developments and other new buildings such as supermarkets (more recent than 1980). These developments might be located on a base map.
- Well annotated field sketches of the area/specific housing schemes or other developments.
- Well annotated photographs of the specific schemes, as above.
- Questionnaires. These might focus on factors such as travel times to work places, accessibility, recent changes of local services and the impact of recent developments.

- Traffic counts made during commuting periods (rush hours) and the quieter times of day to establish various environmental impacts of counter-urbanisation.

The Field Study Council provides some excellent suggestions, see:

http://www.geography-fieldwork.org/ruralfieldwork/counterurbanisation/stage1.htm.

De-population in remote rural areas

- A land use/building survey of the selected area(s) to identify empty and deserted houses, second 'homes' and other empty or disused buildings such as shops, garages, schools and farm buildings. These might be located on a base map.
- Well annotated field sketches of the areas/specific deserted buildings.
- Well annotated photographs of the specific buildings, as above.
- An environmental survey of the selected area(s).
- Questionnaires to establish the changes in employment (particularly in farming and forestry) within the community.
- Questionnaires to establish the loss of services within the community, such as village shops, mobile shops and libraries, bus services and postbus services.

Health and safety

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- the Health and Safety executive – school trips and outdoor learning activities http://www.hse.gov.uk/services/education/school-trips.pdf.

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