



National
Qualifications
2026

2026 Geography

Global Issues and Geographical Skills

Question Paper Finalised Marking Instructions

General marking principles for Higher Geography

Always apply these general principles. Use them in conjunction with the detailed marking instructions, which identify the key features required in candidates' responses.

- (a) Always use positive marking. This means candidates accumulate marks for the demonstration of relevant skills, knowledge and understanding; marks are not deducted for errors or omissions.
- (b) If a candidate response does not seem to be covered by either the principles or detailed marking instructions, and you are uncertain how to assess it, you must seek guidance from your team leader.
- (c) Where the candidate does not comply with the rubric of the paper and answers two parts in one section, mark both responses and record the better mark.
- (d) Marking must be consistent. Never make a hasty judgement on a response based on length, quality of handwriting or a confused start.
- (e) Use the full range of marks available for each question.
- (f) The detailed marking instructions are not an exhaustive list. Award marks for other relevant points.
- (g) Award marks only where points relate to the question asked. Where candidates give points of knowledge without specifying the context, award marks unless it is clear that they do not refer to the context of the question.
- (h) Award marks for knowledge/understanding where points are:
 - relevant to the issue in the question
 - developed (by providing additional detail, exemplification, reasons or evidence)
 - used to respond to the demands of the question (for example evaluate, analyse).

Marking principles for each question type

There is a range of question types in this question paper. For each question type, the following provides an overview of marking principles, and an example.

Describe questions

Candidates gain marks for making relevant, factual points. These should be key points. The points do not need to be in any particular order. Candidates may provide a number of straightforward points or a smaller number of developed points, or a combination of these. Candidates must provide more than an outline or list to gain marks. They could refer to, for example, a landscape feature, a landscape formation process, a situation or facts demonstrating geographical knowledge.

Explain questions

Candidates gain marks for explaining or suggesting reasons for the cause or impact of something, or for referring to causal connections and relationships. Candidates must do more than describe to gain marks here.

- Where the question asks about a landscape feature, candidates should refer to the processes leading to landscape formation.
- For a source-based question, candidates should make use of these and refer to them within their answer for full marks.

Where candidates provide a purely descriptive answer, or one where development is limited, award no more than half the available marks for the question. Other questions look for candidates to demonstrate higher-order skills and will use command words such as analyse, evaluate, to what extent, and discuss.

Analyse questions

Candidates gain marks for identifying parts, the relationship between them, and their relationships with the whole; and for drawing out and relating implications. Award an analysis mark where candidates use their knowledge and understanding or a source to identify relevant components (for example of an idea, theory, argument) and clearly show at least one of the following:

- links between different components
- links between component(s) and the whole
- links between component(s) and related concepts
- similarities and contradictions
- consistency and inconsistency
- different views or interpretations
- possible consequences or implications
- the relative importance of components
- understanding of underlying order or structure.

Where candidates are asked to analyse they should identify parts of a topic or issue and refer to the interrelationships between, or impacts of, various factors. Eg where a question asks for an analysis of the soil-forming properties which lead to the formation of a gley soil, candidates should refer to how the various soil formatting properties contributed to its formation.

Evaluate questions

Candidates gain marks for making a judgement of the success, failure, or impact of something based on criteria. They should give a brief description of the strategy or project being evaluated, before offering an evidenced conclusion.

Account for questions

Candidates gain marks for giving reasons which are often (but not exclusively) from a resource, for example: for a change in trade figures; a need for water management; or differences in development between contrasting developing countries.

Discuss questions

Candidates gain marks for exploring ideas about a project, or the impact of a change. They should consider different views on an issue or argument. This might not be a balanced argument, but they should give a range of impacts or ideas within their answer.

To what extent questions

Candidates gain marks for considering the impact of a management strategy or strategies they have explored. They should give a brief description of the strategy or project being evaluated, before offering an evidenced conclusion. They do not need to offer an overall opinion based on a variety of strategies, but should assess each separately.

Marking instructions for each question

Section 1 – Global issues

Question			General marking instructions for this type of question	Max mark	Specific marking instructions for this question
1.	(a)		Award 1 mark for each descriptive factor. Award 1 mark for each explanation. Award a maximum of 5 marks for descriptive points. Do not credit repeated explanation points e.g. cost.	8	• a site which is close to construction materials / steel and cement (1a mark) would help to reduce the cost of transporting these materials to the construction site (1b mark) • a site close to areas of areas of water/electrical demand (1a mark) would help to reduce water/electrical loss during transportation (1b mark) • an area of low population density (1a mark) would reduce the costs for compensation for re-housing people who live in the area to be flooded (1b mark) • care has to be taken to avoid impacts on communication networks like road or rail links (1b mark) • a site close to an urban area with a large number of workers (1a mark) would reduce the need to build accommodation for the workforce (1b mark) or have to pay extra money to encourage a workforce to move in order to work in the construction phase (1b mark) • an area which does not contain any areas of cultural importance / environmentally sensitive areas (1a mark) would reduce the likelihood of legal action by protestors (1b mark) Or any other valid point.

Question		General marking instructions for this type of question	Max mark	Specific marking instructions for this question
	(b)	Answers must discuss the possible positive impacts. Both socio-economic and environmental factors need to be mentioned to gain full marks. Award 1 mark for each point. Award a maximum of 11 marks if the answer is vague/does not relate to a specific named water management project. Award up to 2 marks for specific named examples within the case study area which further develop the answer.	12	Answers will depend on the water management project chosen. For the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, possible answers might include: - the dam's construction is expected to create up to 12,000 jobs (1 mark) - it will facilitate irrigation of around 500,000ha of new agricultural lands (1 mark). Also reducing approximately 40km of flooding in Sudan (1 mark), protecting land and allowing for increased agricultural production downstream (1 mark) - the dam will also serve as a bridge across the Blue Nile, (1 mark) improving local transport and business connections (1 mark) - the GERD will further capture 90 percent of the sediment (1 mark) protecting irrigation canals and equipment from damages caused by sedimentation (1 mark) - the 100% Ethiopian-financed project is a source of great national pride and unity (1 mark) - reducing negative impacts of climate change such as recurrent floods (1 mark) and storing water in times of drought (1 mark). The dam will regulate the river flow which will help countries downstream better manage their reservoirs (1 mark) - the dam will produce up to 60MW of renewable electrical generation (1 mark). GERD will provide more than 60 million Ethiopians with affordable electricity (1 mark) - industries which need reliable electricity will be more productive (1 mark), for example Universal Gas (1 EG mark) which makes liquid oxygen and supplies hospitals in the region (1 mark) - further investment in the city of Adama (1 EG mark) for example, a new airport, with electric rail line and motorway (1 mark) to the capital Addis Ababa (1 EG mark) - the dam will allow for export of electricity to neighbouring counties of Sudan, Kenya and Djibouti at cheaper cost (1 mark), further boosting the Ethiopian economy (1 mark) - will increase access to clean drinking water (1 mark) reducing the risk of cholera related deaths (1 mark) Or any other valid point.

Question			General marking instructions for this type of question	Max mark	Specific marking instructions for this question
					For the Hoover Dam, possible answers might include: • fresh water supply for growing desert cities (1 mark) e.g. Phoenix (1 EG mark), the population of Phoenix has expanded from 100,000 in 1950 to 1.7 million today (1 mark) • increased standard of living in hot, dry climate with air conditioning, swimming pools, landscaping etc. (1 mark) • areas such as Lake Mead (1 EG mark) have been created by the Hoover Dam and provide an area for water sports, fishing and other forms of recreation (1 mark) • improved flood control downstream in the Colorado basin (1 mark) • the maintenance of the energy plant sustains jobs in the local area (1 mark) • the Hoover Dam generates over 4 billion kilowatt-hours of green hydroelectric power annually (1 mark), supplying affordable, renewable energy to millions of homes and businesses across Nevada, Arizona and Southern California (1 mark) • more industries have been attracted nearby, e.g. chemicals plant (1 mark) in the nearby city of Henderson (1 EG mark) which requires a year-round supply of water (1 mark) • expansion of irrigated land allowed increased agricultural output (1 mark) • new habitats for wildlife have been created, supporting around 250 species of birds (1 mark) including the Blue Heron (1 EG mark) in the Lake Mead National Park • the dam allows for a reliable seasonal water flow for animal and plant life (1 mark) Or any other valid point.

Question			General marking instructions for this type of question	Max mark	Specific marking instructions for this question
2.	(a)		Award 1 mark for each valid point. Both positive and negative development factors can be awarded marks, but markers should take care to avoid crediting direct reversals or repetition of explanations. Award a maximum of 6 marks for description including 1 mark for an appropriate named example which further develops the answer.	10	Points may include: • some countries such as Venezuela (1 EG mark) have natural resources such as oil/bauxite (1a mark), which can be sold to generate foreign currency (1b mark) • some countries are landlocked (1a mark) such as Chad (1 EG mark) and due to this find it more expensive to import and export goods (1b mark) • some countries have beautiful beaches and scenery (1a mark), which attracts tourists creating job opportunities, boosting the economy (1b mark) • countries with a poor education system / many low skilled workers (1a mark) and are unable to attract foreign investment (1b mark) • corrupt officials / governments who syphon / misappropriate funds (1a mark) such as in Zimbabwe (1 EG mark) can lead to money being used inappropriately for personal gain (1b mark) or for funding military manoeuvres (1b mark) • the lack of strict pollution laws (1a mark) in parts of SE Asia has also made some countries more attractive for manufacturing industries (1b mark) • where countries suffer from conflict or civil war (1a mark) many workers are killed / infrastructure is destroyed (1a mark) such as Somalia (1 EG mark) meaning they are unable to keep the economy working / spend extra finance on weapons (1b mark) • natural disasters like earthquakes / hurricanes (1a mark) can destroy infrastructure (1a mark) meaning funds need to be spent on rebuilding rather than development (1b mark) for example Haiti (1 EG mark) • countries which have accumulated large debts (1a mark) have to repay loans and interest causing less money for services (1b mark) • dry climate / drought can lead to malnutrition (1a mark), and a reduced capacity to work and create income (1b mark) Or any other valid point.

Question			General marking instructions for this type of question	Max mark	Specific marking instructions for this question
	(b)		Award 1 mark for each valid explanation. Award up to 1 mark where candidates give appropriate named examples which develop the answer.	10	Points may include: • one method used was to spray pesticides / insecticides on walls in homes to kill the Anopheles mosquitoes (1 mark). For example, Malathion (1 EG mark) • breeding genetically modified sterile mosquitoes cause the species to die out (1 mark). Other GM mosquitoes are unable to carry the parasite (1 mark) these are dominant mosquitoes and would outcompete the others (1 mark) • specially designed mosquito traps use CO₂ to mimic animals and humans (1 mark) • BTI bacteria (1 EG mark) sprayed on bodies of water kill the larvae (1 mark). The larvae eat the bacteria and have their stomach lining destroyed (1 mark) • putting larvae-eating fish into stagnant ponds or padi fields, (1 mark) such as the muddy loach (1 EG mark) • flushing reservoirs every seven days to drown the larvae (1 mark) as it takes longer than this period of time for the larvae to develop into adult mosquitoes (1 mark) • planting eucalyptus trees can help soak up excess moisture reducing the amount of stagnant water/removing the breeding grounds (1 mark) • covering standing water/water storage cans near homes, for example the Oxfam bucket (1 EG mark), reduces available breeding grounds (1 mark) • medication to kill the parasite/prevent infection (1 mark) such as quinine/chloroquine/Lariam/Malarone/Artemisia (1 EG mark). Coartem baby (1 EG mark) is a new medication for newborns up to 5kg in weight (1 mark) • vaccines have been produced to build immunity to the disease (1 mark) such as RTS,S/Mosquirix/R21 (1 EG mark) • educating people to cover their skin at dawn/dusk/use insect repellent (1 mark) to reduce the chances of being bitten (1 mark) • the increased use of insecticide-coated mosquito nets at night to protect people when sleeping (1 mark) For example the WHO's 'Roll Back Malaria' campaign (1 EG mark) Or any other valid point.

Question			General marking instructions for this type of question	Max mark	Specific marking instructions for this question
3.	(a)		Award 1 mark for each valid point. Markers should take care not to credit human causes of climate change.	8	Points may include: • Milankovitch's theory: changes in the Earth's orbit/tilt (1 mark) alter the amount of energy reaching the Earth (1 mark) • every 41,000 years, there is a change in the tilt of the Earth's axis (1 mark). A greater tilt means more sunlight in polar regions (1 mark) and over a 97,000 – year cycle, the Earth's orbit stretches (1 mark) from circular to more elliptical (1 mark) • sunspots are areas of intense activity on the surface of the sun (1 mark), which follow an 11-year pattern (1 mark). Global temperatures can be raised by peaks of sunspot activity (1 mark) • after volcanic eruptions, large amounts of dust and droplets of sulphur (1 mark) may absorb and reflect the sun's rays lowering temperature (1 mark) • retreating ice caps release additional fresh water (1 mark) leading to changes in oceanic circulation (1 mark). This also reduces the albedo effect (1 mark) as reflection has decreased as more land is exposed (1 mark). Methane/CO₂ is being released from melting permafrost (1 mark) Or any other valid point.

Question		General marking instructions for this type of question	Max mark	Specific marking instructions for this question
	(b)	Award 1 mark for an impact of climate change. Award further marks for development of each impact. Award a maximum of 2 marks where candidates give specific, appropriate named examples of authentic locations or events which further develop the answer.	12	Possible answers may include: • sea level rises caused by thermal expansion of the oceans (1 mark) (over 20cm since 1880) and by the melting of glaciers / land-based ice caps (1 mark), for example in Antarctica (1 EG mark) • low-lying coastal areas will suffer flooding (1 mark) for example Jakarta (1 EG mark), leading to large-scale displacement of people (1 mark) and loss of land for farming and destruction of property (1 mark) • climate change refugees moving to higher ground or to other countries (1 mark) from areas such as Tuvalu (1 EG mark) will exert more pressure on resources such as housing, water and power supplies in the receiving area (1 mark) • more extreme and more variable weather such as droughts and flooding (1 mark) e.g., Libya 2023 (1 EG mark), and more frequent and intense hurricanes due to increased sea temperatures (1 mark) for example Hurricane Melissa (1 EG mark) • an increase in precipitation, particularly in the winter in northern countries (1 mark) increase in extent of tropical/vector borne diseases, as warmer areas expand (1 mark) • predicted extinction of species such as the polar bear, due to lack of sea ice to rest on (1 mark) • increased sand temperatures have led to 99% of newborn green turtles being female, reducing their ability to breed (1 mark) • an increase in sea temperature leads to coral reefs bleaching (1 mark) coral expel the algae causing the coral to turn white (1 mark) • a more frequent El Niño/La Niña (1 mark) leads to changes in the monsoon (1 mark) • a prolonged dry season can lead to forest fires (1 mark), for example Greece wildfires (1 EG mark) Or any other valid point.

Question			General marking instructions for this type of question	Max mark	Specific marking instructions for this question
4.	(a)		Award 1 mark for each valid reason.	8	Possible answers might include: - Japan generates the majority of its electricity from oil and gas which it must import (1 mark) as it has very limited reserves of these of its own (1 mark). According to the Japanese government, much of the region lacks adequate solar and wind energy resources compared with Europe or North America (1 mark) - Sweden has the largest amount of Hydroelectric Power because it has high precipitation and fast flowing major rivers that can be harnessed (1 mark). Mountainous regions provide steep slopes to generate power (1 mark). Sweden is a global leader in decarbonisation and has targets to cut greenhouse gas emissions 59% by 2030 (1 mark) - Sweden has invested in nuclear energy as a peaceful, stable country and feels safe to have nuclear power stations (1 mark) - Nuclear power allows energy to be produced as and when required (1 mark) - the USA has large reserves of coal, oil and gas (1 mark). It is a major exporter of oil and gas to other countries (1 mark) - the USA is able to produce large quantities of gas due to investment in fracking (1 mark). This allows the USA to be less reliant on oil from other countries (1 mark) - tropical countries are under the influence of high pressure for much of the year (1 mark), giving clear skies and long hours of sunshine making it ideal for solar power generation (1 mark) included in its 'other' sources of generation. - Scotland has a large coastline which allows for an uninterrupted wind flow (1 mark). Scotland is also a wealthy country which means it can invest in more expensive wind turbines (1 mark). Scotland frequently experiences low pressure (1 mark) and associated winds sufficient to generate wind power, especially over exposed uplands (1 mark) - Iceland is unique as it can produce 87% of its energy from renewable resources (1 mark). Iceland is situated on the Mid-Atlantic Ridge, a tectonic plate boundary that provides abundant geothermal energy resources (1 mark). The country harnesses this geothermal potential by tapping into volcanic heat through geothermal power plants (1 mark), enabling it to produce a significant portion of its electricity sustainably. Or any other valid point.

Question		General marking instructions for this type of question	Max mark	Specific marking instructions for this question
	(b)	Award 1 mark for each point on effectiveness. Candidates must discuss a renewable source of energy. Award no marks for non-renewable sources of energy. Award 2 marks for specific, appropriate named examples which further develop the answer.	12	Possible answers for all renewable energy sources might include: • infinite energy resources/sources of power that are sustainable/cannot run out (1 mark) • independent production of energy reducing the need for reliance on imports of fuel (1 mark) For geothermal power, other possible answers could include: • due to long-lasting, safe, reliable plants, geothermal energy is increasingly low risk and brimming with untapped potential (1 mark) • Geothermal power produces less carbon dioxide, particulate matter and other toxic substances that create the greenhouse effect (1 mark) • using this underground energy allows us to reduce our use of fossil fuels (1 mark) • Geothermal energy is more predictable and reliable than some other renewables e.g. wind power (1 mark) however it provides only 25% of Iceland's energy (1 EG mark) • Geothermal energy is also in line with sustainable development and is essentially free once the plant has been installed (1 mark) a benefit for lower income countries such as Kenya (1 EG mark) which receives around one third of its electricity production from geothermal energy (1 mark) • unlike many other renewables, geothermal energy is always available (1 mark) • a geothermal plant will produce energy for around 8,600 hours a year (1 mark), and geothermal power heats all homes in Reykjavik (1 EG mark) while in solar plants the average is only around 2,000 hours per year, so its production levels are more predictable (1 mark) • unlike traditional power plants, most of the components are buried underground, with very little remaining above ground so there is less visual impact on the surrounding area (1 mark) • geothermal power plants produce negligible and imperceptible noise levels (1 mark) unlike the noise from wind turbines • geothermal energy can work at full capacity non-stop (1 mark) unlike solar panels as the energy is permanently available • the power plants have a lifespan of 80-100 years (1 mark) so are therefore more sustainable and with no fuel there is no risk of fire (1 mark) Or any other valid point.

Question	General marking instructions for this type of question	Max mark	Specific marking instructions for this question
			For wind power, other possible answers could include: • in countries with a windy climate and exposed uplands / long coastlines with areas of uninterrupted winds (1 mark) e.g. The Aberdeen Offshore Windfarm in the North Sea (1 EG mark) • winds in Scotland can be strong enough to power the equivalent of all electricity needs for 1 day (1 mark) • wind energy may reduce energy bills (1 mark) • as power from onshore/offshore energy is now cheaper than electricity produced from any other source in the UK (1 mark) • wind power can be irregular and intermittent (1 mark) • during high pressure, for example, there can be periods of no winds or very low speeds (1 mark), leaving wind turbines motionless and not producing power (1 mark) • during periods of high winds during winter/low pressure weather systems (1 mark) when winds are faster than 25 m/s turbines are turned off to avoid damage (1 mark). This may coincide with very cold periods in winter when demand is higher (1 mark) • Although it is currently difficult/expensive to store wind energy (1 mark), this can be done through recent developments in battery energy storage systems (BESS) (1 mark) • However, wind turbines may be switched off at times due to over-production (1 mark) • wind farms are usually found in rural locations far from areas of high demand (1 mark) • electricity may be lost in transferring from areas of production to areas of higher demand/population (1 mark) Or any other valid point.

Section 2 – Application of geographical skills

Question			General marking instructions for this type of question	Max mark	Specific marking instructions for this question
5.	(a) and (b)		Award 1 mark for each description of the site, or explanation of suitability of the site. Award 1 mark for each impact and award a further mark where the candidate develops this. Award 1 mark where candidates refer to the resource and award further marks where the candidate explains its suitability (beyond the wording of the resource). Award up to 4 marks for map evidence (EG), which may include correct and appropriate grid references and/or place/road names. It is possible that some points referred to as a disadvantage will be interpreted by other candidates as a negative impact. Award marks for each point only once, where it is best explained.	20	Possible advantages of this location may include: • area chosen for the development is gently sloping (1 mark) which would keep construction costs down (1 mark) • the development site has access to an A class road which makes it easier for construction vehicles/future resident to access it (1 mark) for example the A404 (1 EG mark) • as the site already has B class road adjacent to it, which could be expanded to access the site for the delivery of materials (1 mark) • as it is on the outskirts of Chorleywood, the land is likely to be cheaper to buy (1 mark) • there are already residential developments to south of the site so this development would be in keeping with the local environment (1 mark) • the site is free from any rivers or bodies of water reducing the need for expensive drainage (1 mark) • the site is only around 35km from nearby cities such as Luton or London (1 mark) which means the properties will be desirable as they are in the commuter belt for these cities (1 mark) • there are no existing developments on the site reducing construction costs (1 mark) • there are many footpaths around the area e.g. Chess Valley Walk (1 EG mark) for families to explore (1 mark) Possible disadvantages of this location may include: • the A404 (1 EG mark) and adjacent B-class road limit potential future expansion of the housing development (1 mark) • lakes and marshland to the west of the site limits future expansion (1 mark) • compensation may need to be paid to local farmers who own the land (1 mark) • as it is a greenfield site, construction could face strong opposition from conservationists (1 mark)

Question			General marking instructions for this type of question	Max mark	Specific marking instructions for this question
					Possible impacts on the surrounding area might include: Negative Environmental Impacts: - whilst new pedestrian links will link to the train station to the south at 026961 (1 EG mark) this will still be almost 1km away from houses in the north of the development (1 mark) therefore people may still choose to have the convenience of their own cars leading to increased traffic and air pollution (1 mark) - Chorleywood Common nature reserve (1 EG mark) is less than 250m away from the development site (1 mark) therefore it is possible that noise pollution from the site may impact the wildlife at this site (1 mark) - nearby farms such as Stubbs Farm (1 EG mark) may be impacted by dust hampering crop growth (1 mark) - increased flood risk due to new impermeable surfaces (1 mark) - Urban sprawl may destroy the rural feel of the area (1 mark) - increased traffic on A404 would lead to higher air and noise pollution for surrounding homes (1 mark) this could build on the increase in traffic already seen from 15,400 in 2020 to 18,700 in 2024 (1) Positive Environmental Impacts: - the new park would help to enhance biodiversity in the area as wetland areas are planned (1 mark) - existing trees and hedgerows retained and enhanced on the site will provide a pleasant environment for new families to take walks around the area (1 mark) and provide new habitats for wildlife (1 mark) Negative Socio-Economic Impacts: - short-term construction jobs will be created whilst the development is being built (1 mark). Once complete, some long-term jobs will be created at the new primary school (1 mark) however these will not be sufficient for the 675 homes being built therefore the development will put pressure on the local economy to provide enough jobs for those who live there (1 mark) - local residents in nearby areas of Chorleywood may suffer from noise pollution during the construction phase (1 mark) especially in areas such as 025965 (1 EG mark) - increased pressure on existing local services such as health centres (1 mark)

Question			General marking instructions for this type of question	Max mark	Specific marking instructions for this question
					Positive Socio-Economic Impacts: • 50% affordable housing built will mean there will be a greater social mix in the area (1 mark) • the new primary school will provide places for younger children to go to school close to their home (1 mark) • The population of the local area has increased from 79,000 in 1991 to 94,000 in 2021 (1 mark) and this new housing can help meet future demand (1 mark) • as the development only lies around 1.5km from junction 16 on the M25 (1 EG mark) motorway, the residents can commute to the nearby city of Watford (1 EG mark) • an influx of new residents in the area will likely lead to increase spending in the town through the multiplier effect (1 mark) this could prove essential to local facilities such as the golf club situated at 027962 (1 EG mark) who may benefit from an increase in number of members (1 mark) Or any other valid point.

[END OF MARKING INSTRUCTIONS]