

Component 3

The essays

Key points for all the essays: AOs

Be aware of the (generic) markscheme – and what the Assessment Objectives (AOs) are looking for:

- **AO1 (*Know*)** – Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of places, environments, concepts, processes, interactions and change at a variety of scales [20]
- **AO2 (*Apply*)** – Apply knowledge and understanding in different contexts either to analyse or interpret or evaluate geographical issues and information [20]
- **AO3 (*Skill*)** – Use a variety of relevant 'geographical skills' to construct arguments and draw conclusions [5]

There's a copy of the Ecosystems one on the website:

<http://www.bws-school.org.uk/Curriculum-Exams/Geography/files/?dir=03%20A%20Level/Contemporary%20Themes/Ecosystems>

Component 3 Command Words

C3 commands	What they require
Discuss	Goes beyond knowledge and understanding to offer a considered review that includes a range of arguments. It becomes a written debate, identifying through description and explanation, both positive and negative points and reaches a conclusion from the debate.*
Evaluate	Goes beyond knowledge and understanding to evaluate. Requires a judgement about the overall quality or value of the feature(s)/issue(s) in terms of the strengths and limitations. *
To what extent....?	Goes beyond knowledge and understanding to give possible explanations for and against, and justify a viewpoint(s).*
Justify	Goes beyond knowledge and understanding to explain why the choice given is better than other possible options.*

* Supporting evidence should be clearly given in all cases

Tackling A02

Having identified the command word, create a debate or argument around it

Identify the command

You should be able to apply relevant concepts to each essay question... so make sure you know what they are from the specification

Identify specialised concepts

Use contrasting and/or evaluative language, e.g. 'However...', 'on the other hand...', 'nevertheless...', 'as opposed to...' and 'yet...'

Use evaluative language

Draw knowledge together to reach rational conclusions to the argument or debate. Use appropriate language e.g. 'in conclusion...', 'in summary...', 'therefore...'

Synthesise knowledge

Key points for all the essays: planning

All essays need to be planned – in the exam you will have a little over 45mins for each of the two essays: 5mins spent planning will enable you to write a better essay

- Read the question carefully – underline key words
- What's the command word? It will always require evaluation, discussion, justification ... not just simple description or explanation
- What are your key ideas?
- What specialised concepts are relevant?
- You need to consider different arguments and come to a decision based on your evidence – it cannot just be your belief/opinion that something is so
- What evidence have you to support these?
- What's the best order for your arguments?

Key points for all the essays: writing

Introduction:

Single, short paragraph

Often useful to define terms, if appropriate

Consider indicating your view with respect to the essay title – this helps the reader to follow your line of reasoning

Key points for all the essays: writing

Body:

Use paragraphs to separate ideas

Always support arguments with factual, place-specific evidence

Try to link ideas clearly back to the essay title at start or end of paragraph

Order (and balance) is important

Terms and concepts

Precision

Sophistication of argument

} Use of language

Key points for all the essays: writing

Conclusion:

Single, short paragraph

Summarise key arguments (but avoid repeating large chunks of text)

Link all together to draw an overall conclusion

Further guidance

There is no single, definitive way to plan and write an essay, though most guides are quite similar. The best thing to do is to try a few and see which best suits the way you think and work. Some advice is consistent, though:

- Read the Q carefully and ensure you have fully understood what is needed.
- Plan!
- Organise your ideas into the best order
- Ensure all arguments are supported with evidence – otherwise it's just an opinion and this will count for little in a Geography essay.

Useful resources

If you haven't written an essay for some time and are a bit rusty then the following might be helpful to get you started:

<http://ergo.slv.vic.gov.au/learn-skills/essay-writing-skills>

The State Library of Victoria, Australia website has helpful hints about each stage in the process + some useful templates to help you organise your ideas...

<https://www.thestudygurus.com/files/products/ESK/%5BTSG%5D%20Essay%20Plan%20Template.pdf>

A useful guide to planning an essay

<https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/301/study-skills/writing/academic-writing/planning-structure>

A guide produced for students at Sheffield University (including a Prezi):