

## *Strategies to support students in tackling level marked questions*

### About the author

Lizzie Butler has 12 years' teaching experience and is the Lead Geography Consultant at the Harris Federation, a multi-academy trust with 27 secondary schools, most of which follow the OCR Geography B specification. She works with a wide range of teachers on effective delivery of the specification and with students on how to access the questions. All of the strategies outlined below have proved effective with classes of all abilities in helping them engage with the demands of the exams.

### Note

Within this resource exam question samples have been taken from the Geography GCSE A and B assessments. The worked examples use GCSE B questions, however, the same approaches can be used with GCSE A questions.

### Introduction:

To prepare students to answer extended response questions in exams, classroom teachers must do two things effectively:

1. Help students break down the questions and comprehend what it is they are being asked to do.
2. Help students build answers which specifically target the question and include the relevant level of detail.

## Part 1: Helping students break down the questions and comprehend what it is they are being asked to do.

An in-class 'Step-by-Step How To' place mat is included as a resource with this [document](#).

### BUG the Question

'Bugging' the question helps students identify the component parts of the question. This will need to be heavily teacher led and directed to begin with, but you should gradually withdraw support so that students 'Bug' it independently and work out what they need to do.

**Box** the command word

**Underline** the key terms/geography

**Glance** at the marks and back at the question

GCSE Geography B J384/01 June 2018 Question 4(e)

(e) **Case study – Sustainable management of an area of tropical rainforest.**

**Evaluate** the effectiveness of **one** way in which an area of tropical rainforest you have studied is being sustainably managed.

Name of tropical rainforest area studied: .....

..... [6]

Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. Soc/Ec/Env

6 marks - developed points

*Annotations:*

- A03 command word. Give the positives and negatives
- Only talk about ONE way

GCSE Geography A J383/02 June 2019 Question 2(b)

### (b)\* CASE STUDY – Sustainable strategies in an LIDC or EDC city

To what extent have sustainable strategies overcome **one** of the city's challenges?

**LIDC or EDC city studied:** .....

..... [12]



Spelling, punctuation and grammar and the use of specialist terminology [3]

### How do I know if I have to use a case study and what does this mean?

- (e) **Case study – Sustainable management of an area of tropical rainforest.**
- (e) **Case study – the landscape of a UK river basin.**
- (e) **CASE STUDY – ways of life in cities**

Questions which require you to use a case study will always state **'Case Study'** in bold BEFORE they ask the question.

This means that your answer MUST include specific details about the place which makes it unique and distinguishes it from anywhere else, OR a generic answer.

### Going beyond 'BUG'

'Bugging' the question itself is not always enough to help clarify to students what they must do.

One useful technique is to encourage students to write the question in their own words, without using the words from the question which makes it more accessible to them. Encourage students to substitute the name of their specific case study into the question to focus their answer and prompt them to use place specific detail.

#### In my own words this means:

*"Give the positives and negatives about the ways Yachana Eco-lodge is helping the environment and local people."*

A final strategy which can help students unpick and make sense of the demands of the exam question is once they have 'bugged' the question to consider completing the following table:

What knowledge do i need?	How do i use the knowledge to respond to the command word?	How am i going to structure my answer?
<p>My tropical rainforest case study.</p> <p>At least 3 specific details, location, facts, figures which makes the place you are writing about identifiable. (Can the examiner put their finger over the case study and work out where you are referring to?)</p> <p>What it has done to try to be sustainable?</p>	<p>Give the positives and negatives of the methods they have tried to use to manage it sustainably.</p> <p>Decide if the positives outweigh the negatives.</p>	<p>Well-developed points</p> <p>PEED</p> <p>On</p> <p>PEED</p> <p>Con</p> <p><a href="#">(see writing frames below)</a></p>

## Part 2: Help students build answers which specifically target the question and include the relevant level of detail.

### Writing Frames

It is possible, and in some cases no doubt preferable for students not to feel constrained by writing frames or having to follow a certain structure. It is entirely possible to achieve full marks on extended response questions without following a particular writing frame. However, many students find it very difficult to structure an answer and using a writing frame, especially at the beginning of the course can help ensure their answers flow, include place specific detail where necessary and respond to the command word.

The following page will consider going beyond 'PEE' or 'PEEL' to ensure students are writing 'well-developed' paragraphs to access Level 3 or Level 4 on the mark scheme.

**A writing frame for AO3 questions (Examine, Assess, Evaluate, Justify, To what extent...) –  
PEED ON PEED CON**

GCSE Geography B J384/01 June 2018 Question 4(e)

**(e) Case study – Sustainable management of an area of tropical rainforest.**

Evaluate the effectiveness of **one** way in which an area of tropical rainforest you have studied is being sustainably managed.

Name of tropical rainforest area studied: .....

<b>Point</b>	The Yachana Ecolodge in Ecuador has been successful in sustainably managing a small area of the tropical rainforest just north of the Napo River.	→	Place has been identified.  Effectiveness comment has been made.  Clearly links to the Q.
<b>Evidence</b>	For example, they provide 13 cottages of high-end accommodation for tourists which use rainwater harvesting to collect and provide their water and solar panels to provide their electricity.	→	Place specific detail is given.
<b>Explain</b>	This means they are able to provide for tourists in an ecologically friendly way which reduces carbon emissions and doesn't waste water.	→	Explanation is given as to why the features identified are good/successful
<b>Develop/Explain</b>	This is sustainable as the income from the tourists contributes to the local economy and helps improve the lives of the local people without damaging the environment.	→	The point is developed further "well developed" and explicitly linked back to the concept of 'sustainability' as required by the question.
<b>ON the other hand</b>	However,		
<b>Point</b>	The Yachana Ecolodge is not completely effective in sustainably managing the rainforest.		
<b>Evidence</b>	Tourists still travel thousands of miles to reach the resort and most of those who can afford the prices travel from the USA, Europe and Australia.		
<b>Explain</b>	This means that the lodge encourages air travel which produced a lot of carbon emissions.		
<b>Develop/Explain</b>	This means that despite their efforts to reduce carbon emissions, there might still be a lot of pollution associated with eco-tourism at Yachana Eco-lodge.		
<b>CONclusion</b>	Overall, despite the negative aspects, Yachana eco-lodge is effectively managing the rainforest in a sustainable way.	→	Repeat for the other side of the argument.  A conclusion ties it all together. It might be useful for students to look at the evidence and write a short conclusion FIRST before building the rest of the answer.

An example writing frame for questions with the command words, Explain, Discuss, Suggest:

GCSE Geography B J384/01 June 2018 Question 3(e)

**(e) Case study – the landscape of a UK river basin.**

Discuss the influence of geology in the formation of river landforms within your chosen river basin.

Bring forward the important points. Explain.

Type of rocks

Individual features on the river, eg waterfalls or meanders.

Name of chosen river basin in the UK: .....

..... **[6]**

6 marks - developed points

**In my own words this means:**

"Talk about how the different types of rock and speed of the water has caused a waterfall to form on the River Tees."

GCSE Geography A J383/01 June 2018 Question 1(c)

**(c)\* CASE STUDY – a UK river basin**

Name your chosen river basin in the UK: .....

'Human activities have a greater impact on the landscape in your chosen river basin than geomorphic processes.'

To what extent do you agree? **[12]**



Spelling, punctuation and grammar and the use of specialist terminology **[3]**

What knowledge do I need?	How do I use the knowledge to respond to the command word?	How am I going to structure my answer?
My river basin case study The names of the types of rock there The name of a couple of landforms there The formation of those landforms	Explain clearly how the rock type helped shape the landform Explain what else helps to create the landform e.g. speed of water Make sure it is specific for my case study	AO2 PEEED (possibly x2) <a href="#">See writing frame below</a>

**A writing frame for level marked questions (Explain, Discuss, Suggest) – PEEED**

GCSE Geography B J384/01 June 2018 Question 3(e)

**(e) Case study – the landscape of a UK river basin.**

Discuss the influence of geology in the formation of river landforms within your chosen river basin.

Name of chosen river basin in the UK: .....

<b>Point</b>	High Force Falls waterfall has formed on the River Tees in Teesdale, Country Durham due to geology and different rock types.	→	Place has been identified.  Clearly links to the Qu with reference to a landform and geology
<b>Evidence</b>	The River Tees flows over Whin sill, which is hard rock and resistant to erosion and sandstone which is soft rock and less resistant to erosion.	→	Place specific details which makes this waterfall formation distinguishable from other waterfalls.
<b>Explain</b>	This means that the soft rock erodes faster than the hard rock due to the power of the water, this creates a step, which increases over time due to hydraulic action and abrasion forming a plunge pool.	┌ ├ └	Students will achieve marks by making one point and developing it fully rather than 2 separate points which are not developed or well developed.
<b>Explain</b>	Over time, the soft rock is eroded further undercutting the hard rock creating an overhang, which eventually collapses.		
<b>Develop</b>	This process repeats over time and the waterfall retreats backwards forming a steep-sided gorge. It is both the river's velocity and hardness of the rocks that helps create this landform.		

## Part 3: Tackling the Fieldwork Questions

GCSE Geography B J384/01 June 2018 Question 5(d)

**(d)\*** You will have carried out some **physical** geography fieldwork as part of your GCSE Geography course.

Name the fieldwork .....

.....


To what extent was your primary data collection successful?

GCSE Geography A J383/03 June 2018 Question 5(c)

**(c)\*** Evaluate how effective the fieldwork data you collected was in helping you to reach a conclusion.

.....

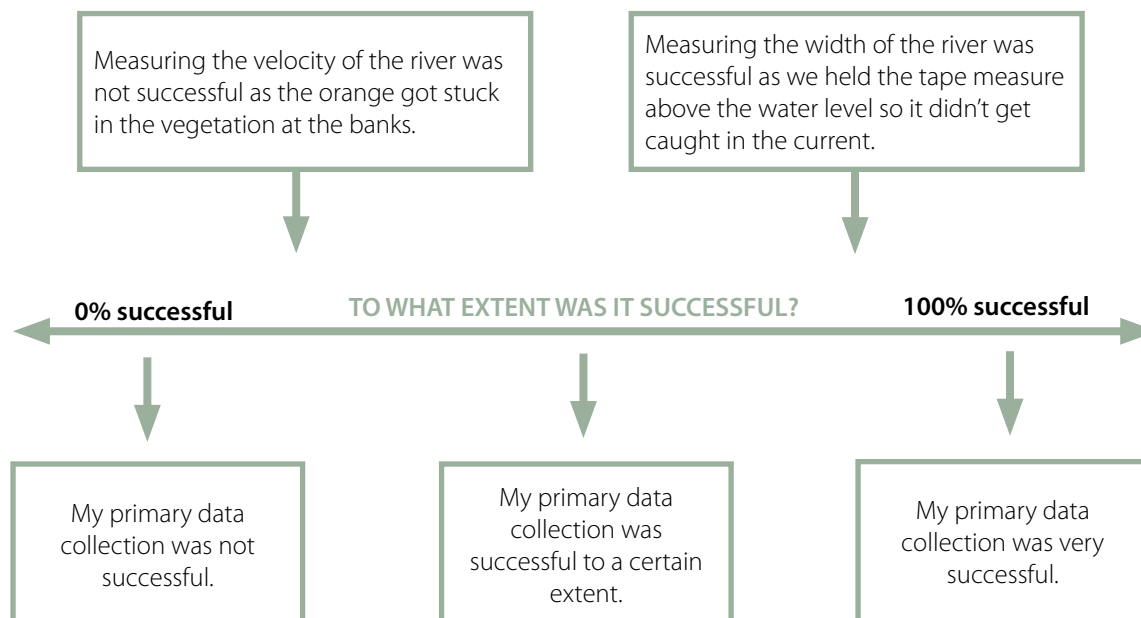
..... [8]

 **Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar and the use of specialist terminology [3]**

Students should always write the full title of their fieldwork enquiry in this space here. Students won't get a mark for it, but it will help them focus their answer.

The command term is 'To what extent...' meaning we need to make and show a judgement and use evaluative language throughout our answer.

A helpful way to scaffold this for students is to consider the 'to what extent' continuum, using an arrow like the one below, they place each of their primary methods along the arrow where they feel it best fits. The location of these then generates a sentence starter for students to scaffold their answer.



Once they have generated their overall argument and their 'points' (using the above continuum) they can develop their points. A useful technique to get students to think about developing their points is the 'SO WHAT?' factor and to link it to the other elements of the enquiry process.

- **POINT:** My primary data collection was successful to a certain extent.
- **EVIDENCE:** Measuring the width of the river was successful as we held the tape measure tightly above the water level so it didn't get caught in the current. **SO WHAT? HOW DID THAT AFFECT YOUR RESULTS?**
- **EXPLAIN:** This meant that the tape measure was straight, so our results were more accurate. **SO WHAT? HOW DID THAT AFFECT YOUR CONCLUSIONS?**
- **EXPLAIN:** Therefore, our conclusions are more likely to be valid which means our method was a success.

**Top tips 1** Read the question very carefully. Look out for the words 'physical' or 'human'. Students need to be careful not to write about the wrong fieldwork here which limits their marks.

**Top tips 2** Always write the full title or question from your fieldwork enquiry in the space provided. It will help student's focus their answer.

**Top tips 3** Use the 'BUG' technique to identify the command words and the key terms from the question.

**Top tips 4** Ask students to consider the whole enquiry process in their response and use it to develop their answer and points fully.




# 1. Part 4: How do students use the resources in their extended response questions?

**Top Tips 1.** If the questions says '**Using Fig. x**' it means there are marks explicitly available for using the data and information taken directly from the resource.

GCSE Geography B J384/02 June 2018 Question 5(d)

Using evidence from **Figs 6, 7a, 7b and 7c**, write a conclusion to the hypothesis: '*Transport provision in Norwich is causing problems now and will do so in the future*'. Develop your answer.

.....  
 ..... [8]

 Spelling, punctuation and grammar and the use of specialist terminology [3]

GCSE Geography A J383/03 June 2018 Question 4(c)

**(c) Fig. 8** in the separate Resource Booklet locates the four study sites along the River Dart.

Using both the table of data on page 10 and **Fig. 8**, assess the evidence for the following hypothesis:

*'The River Dart increases in both width and depth as it flows downstream.'*

.....  
 ..... [6]

**Top Tips 2.** Make it clear to the examiner they are using a resource, but don't spend too long on it! Students could start their sentences with phrases such as "Fig x shows that..." or "As seen in Fig x".

**Top Tips 3.** If there is a table of data or a graph look for quick and simple ways students can manipulate the data to show 'analysis' skills. (See Fig. 7c on following page).

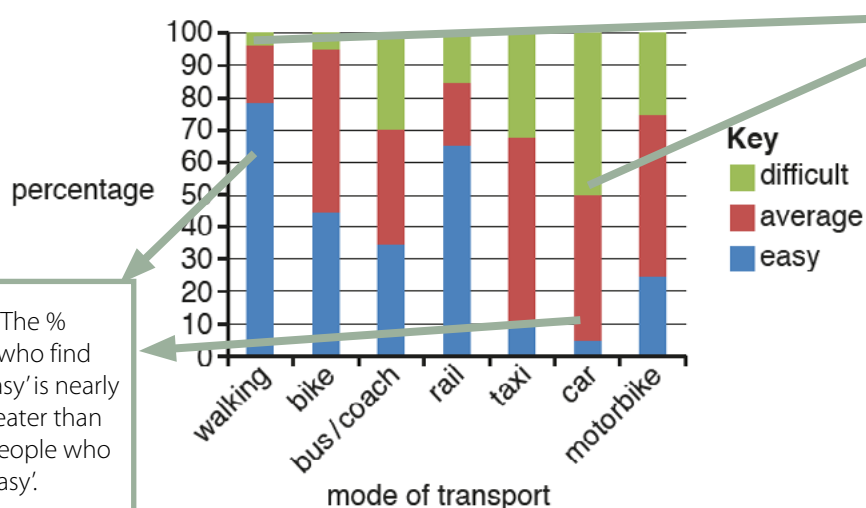
**Top Tips 4.** Try to make links between the Figures they have been given (see example on following page).

**Fig. 6 – Traffic congestion in the city of Norwich.****Fig. 7a – Resident journeys into Norwich.**

Mode of transport	Percentage of journeys
Walking	17%
Bike	5%
Bus/Coach	7%
Rail	3%
Taxi	2%
Car	65%
Motorbike	1%

**Top Tip 4:**

Fig 7c shows that % of people who find walking 'easy' is nearly 8 times greater than the % of people who find cars 'easy'. This could be explained as the photograph in Fig. 6 shows cars stuck in traffic congestion, whereas people are walking freely on the pavement. This could be because, as shown in Fig. 7a, nearly two-thirds of residents' journeys use a car.

**Fig. 7c – Residents' opinions on ease of use of different transport types.**

**Top Tip 3:** The % of people who find walking 'easy' is nearly 8 times greater than the % of people who find cars 'easy'.

**Top Tip 3:** The % of people who find cars 'difficult' is greater than those who find 'bikes' difficult.

Fig 6 image : © Simon Finlay. Permission to reproduce all copyright material has been applied for. In some cases, efforts to contact copyright-holders have been unsuccessful and OCR will be happy to rectify any omissions of acknowledgements in future papers if notified.

Fig 7a, 7b, 7c OCR is aware that third party material appeared in this exam but it has not been possible to identify and acknowledge the source.

# Exam question place mat

## Step 1 - BUG the question

**Box** the command word

**Underline** the key terms/geography

**Glance** at the marks and back at the question

## Step 5 – How do I **develop** my points?

'This means that...' 'This demonstrates that...'

'This will lead to...' 'Therefore...'

'This was because...'

## Step 4 – How do I need to **structure** my 6 and 8 mark answers?

AO2 – PEED x2

AO3 – PEED ON PEED CON

## Step 3 – Does the question ask me to use a case study?

- Which case study do I need to use?
- What are the key facts and figures for this case study that will help me answer the question

## Step 2 - What does the **command** word want me to do

Command word	What do you need to do?
Compare	Describe similarities and differences between two or more things.
Define	Give the meaning of a word, phrase or idea. One sentence.
Describe	Give the main characteristics of something. Say what you see. Tell me what you know.
Discuss	Bring forward the important points. Give the points on both sides of an argument and come to a conclusion. Explain in detail. Develop your points
Evaluate	Give the positives and negatives. Explain WHY they are positive and negative. Develop these points. Weigh up if the positives outweigh the negatives.
Examine	Investigate in detail. Establish the key facts and important issues. Develop your points.
Assess	Weigh up two sides of an issue. Make a judgement. Develop your points
Explain	Give reasons why something happens. Develop your points
Identify	Name an example, sometimes from a map, photo or graph. Select a piece of information
Justify	Give valid reasons and evidence to support an answer.
Outline	Summarise (keep simple) the main points. Could involve some explanation.
Suggest	Give an explanation for something when you can't be sure. Develop your points
To what extent...	Give both sides of an argument. Give a judgement and conclusion

## OCR Resources: *the small print*

OCR's resources are provided to support the delivery of OCR qualifications, but in no way constitute an endorsed teaching method that is required by OCR. Whilst every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of the content, OCR cannot be held responsible for any errors or omissions within these resources. We update our resources on a regular basis, so please check the OCR website to ensure you have the most up to date version.

This resource may be freely copied and distributed, as long as the OCR logo and this small print remain intact and OCR is acknowledged as the originator of this work.

Our documents are updated over time. Whilst every effort is made to check all documents, there may be contradictions between published support and the specification, therefore please use the information on the latest specification at all times. Where changes are made to specifications these will be indicated within the document, there will be a new version number indicated, and a summary of the changes. If you do notice a discrepancy between the specification and a resource please contact us at: [resources.feedback@ocr.org.uk](mailto:resources.feedback@ocr.org.uk).

OCR acknowledges the use of the following content: N/A

Whether you already offer OCR qualifications, are new to OCR, or are considering switching from your current provider/awarding organisation, you can request more information by completing the Expression of Interest form which can be found here: [www.ocr.org.uk/expression-of-interest](http://www.ocr.org.uk/expression-of-interest)

Please get in touch if you want to discuss the accessibility of resources we offer to support delivery of our qualifications: [resources.feedback@ocr.org.uk](mailto:resources.feedback@ocr.org.uk)

## Looking for a resource?

There is now a quick and easy search tool to help find **free** resources for your qualification:

[www.ocr.org.uk/i-want-to/find-resources/](http://www.ocr.org.uk/i-want-to/find-resources/)

## Need to get in touch?

If you ever have any questions about OCR qualifications or services (including administration, logistics and teaching) please feel free to get in touch with our **Customer Support Centre**.

### General qualifications

Telephone 01223 553998

Facsimile 01223 552627

Email [general.qualifications@ocr.org.uk](mailto:general.qualifications@ocr.org.uk)

[www.ocr.org.uk](http://www.ocr.org.uk)

OCR is part of Cambridge Assessment, a department of the University of Cambridge. For staff training purposes and as part of our quality assurance programme your call may be recorded or monitored.

© OCR 2020 Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations is a Company Limited by Guarantee. Registered in England. Registered office The Triangle Building, Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge, CB2 8EA. Registered company number 3484466. OCR is an exempt charity.

