

N5

National 5
Coursework
Assessment Task



National 5 Geography Assignment Assessment task

Valid from session 2024-25 and until further notice.

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Introduction

This document contains instructions for teachers and lecturers, marking instructions and instructions for candidates for the National 5 Geography assignment. It must be read in conjunction with the course specification.

This assignment is worth 20 marks. The marks contribute 20% of the overall marks for the course assessment.

This is one of two course assessment components. The other component is a question paper.

Instructions for teachers and lecturers

Specified resources to be taken into assessment: Processed Information

During the final production of evidence stage, candidates should only have access to their Processed Information. This Processed Information should consist of no more than two single sides of A4 or one single side of A3 paper. Candidates should process, annotate, or highlight this Processed Information, during the research stage, prior to the production of evidence stage. This Processed Information must be submitted to SQA along with the candidate evidence.

The Processed Information should show evidence of primary and/or secondary research carried out by the candidate.

Processed Information may include:

- ◆ evidence gathered during fieldwork
- ◆ statistical, graphical or numerical data
- ◆ survey results
- ◆ information gathered from interviews and questionnaires
- ◆ a list of internet search engine results
- ◆ a newspaper article or extracts
- ◆ notes taken from a visit or talk
- ◆ notes taken from a written or audio visual source

Teachers and lecturers may advise candidates on information which would be appropriate for the assignment at National 5 level.

The Processed Information is not marked, however, candidates must make reference to it in the descriptions and explanations of their research findings to be awarded full marks. If a candidate does not submit Processed Information, a penalty of 4 marks out of the total of 20 is applied.

The production of evidence stage takes place under a high degree of supervision and control, and can be completed using the supplied report template, or blank paper.

Templates

Report and Processed Information templates are available to download separately in Word format for completion electronically.

Marking instructions

In line with SQA's normal practice, the following marking instructions are addressed to the marker. They will also be helpful for those preparing candidates for course assessment.

Candidate evidence will be submitted to SQA for external marking.

General marking principles

This information is provided to help you understand the general principles that must be applied when marking candidate responses to this assignment. These principles must be read in conjunction with the detailed marking instructions, which identify the key features required in candidate responses.

- a Marks for each candidate response must **always** be assigned in line with these general marking principles and the detailed marking instructions for this assessment.
- b Marking should always be positive. This means that, for each candidate response, marks are accumulated for the demonstration of relevant skills, knowledge and understanding: they are not deducted from a maximum on the basis of errors or omissions.
- c If a specific 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.

Candidates are awarded marks for demonstrating specific skills, knowledge and understanding when producing their report, as follows:

- A Describing two research methods used to collect information about the topic or issue**
 - ◆ Candidates may gain marks in a number of ways up to a maximum of 6 marks.
 - ◆ Award a maximum of 4 marks for any one method.
 - ◆ For full marks, reference must be made to two research methods.

- B Describing and explaining, with reference to Processed Information, findings about the topic or issue, and reaching a well-supported conclusion**
 - ◆ Candidates may gain marks in a number of ways up to a maximum of 14 marks.
 - ◆ Award a maximum of 3 marks for descriptions, and the remaining marks for valid explanatory and concluding points.
 - ◆ Candidates may achieve all 14 marks for explanatory and concluding points.
 - ◆ Processed Information is evidence that candidates have gathered during the research phase of the assignment. If they do not make reference to this Processed Information in their descriptions and

explanations, or if no Processed Information is included, they can only achieve up to a maximum of 10 marks for part B.

- ◆ Award marks according to the level of detail given, the quality of the descriptions and explanations about the main findings, and references to the Processed Information used during the assessment.
- ◆ Do not award marks for direct copying from the Processed Information.
- ◆ Award marks for detailed interpretation, explanation and analysis of the main findings.

Detailed marking instructions

1	Marking instructions	Max mark	Additional guidance
1A	<p>Describing two research methods used to collect information about the topic or issue.</p> <p>Candidates can gain marks in a number of ways up to a maximum of 6 marks.</p> <p>For full marks, candidates must describe two research methods. Award a maximum of 4 marks for any one research method.</p> <p>Award marks depending on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ appropriateness of research method ◆ the level of detail and development <p>If more than two research methods are described, mark them all and award marks for the highest two.</p>	6	<p>Example answer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ I carried out a traffic survey, (1 mark, technique), as I was researching ways of improving the central shopping area in the town (1 mark). It was done at various points along Main Street at different times of day (1 mark) in order to find out when the traffic was heavy and when it was quiet (1 mark). <p>I also interviewed pedestrians (1 mark, technique) on Main Street to find out their views about traffic problems and their solutions (1 mark). I asked them questions like were they concerned about traffic on Main Street (1 mark). To make my results better I could ask more people to get a wider range of solutions (1 mark).</p> <p>This answer achieved 2 marks for identifying the techniques used and a possible further 6 marks for describing how the techniques were used. As there is a maximum of 6 marks for this section, this answer has received full marks.</p>

1	Marking instructions	Max mark	Additional guidance
1B	<p>Describing and explaining, with reference to Processed Information, findings about the topic or issue.</p> <p>Reaching a well-supported conclusion about the topic or issue.</p> <p>Candidates can gain marks in a number of ways up to a maximum of 14 marks, but 0 marks should be awarded for straight lifts from the Processed Information.</p> <p>Award a maximum of 3 marks for description, and award the remaining marks for valid explanatory and concluding points. Candidates may be awarded all 14 marks for explanatory and concluding points.</p> <p>For full marks, candidates must make reference to Processed Information.</p> <p>If candidates do not refer to Processed Information in their descriptions and explanations, or if no Processed Information is included, award up to a maximum of 10 marks.</p>	14	<p>Example answer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The number of vehicles on Main Street is different at different times of the day (1 mark, description). <p>Diagram A shows that the highest traffic flow was between 5pm and 6pm (1 mark, description) while the quietest time during the day was between 9am and 10am (1 mark, description); traffic flows varied between 250 vehicles per hour down to just 75 vehicles per hour (1 mark, description). The interviews with pedestrians (Diagram B) showed that nearly all of them (96%) were concerned about traffic levels on Main Street (1 mark, description) while over 75% said that they were worried about air pollution levels (1 mark, description); the majority of pedestrians (58%) said that they used public transport to get into the centre (1 mark, description) while 34% drove into the centre (1 mark, description). Only a quarter of the people who drove into the centre said that they would be prepared to use public transport instead (1 mark, description).</p> <p>Only 2% of people interviewed cycled into the centre (1 mark, description) and nearly all of them said that they were worried about road safety (1 mark, description) which may be due to the traffic levels (1 mark, explanation). Over half of the people interviewed said that they thought Main Street should be pedestrianised (1 mark, description) while 36% said that they thought it should be restricted to buses and bicycles only (1 mark, description).</p>

1	Marking instructions	Max mark	Additional guidance
1B continued	<p>Award 0 marks for direct copying from Processed Information.</p> <p>Award marks according to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ level of detail and development of descriptions and explanations about main findings ◆ how effectively Processed Information is used ◆ accuracy and quality of explanations and analysis in concluding statements ◆ how effectively the conclusion is supported by Processed Information ◆ how clearly concluding points are linked to findings 		<p>Interview results showed that many people think that the council should do something to improve the situation (1 mark, description); I think that the most popular solution according to the survey, pedestrianisation (0 marks, repeat point), should happen as soon as possible as it would help to make Main Street safer (1 mark, explanation).</p> <p>The busiest time on Main Street is between 5pm and 6pm (0 marks, repeat point). This is likely to be because people are heading home from work during this time (1 mark, explanation). This time corresponded with the highest number of vehicles recorded in the survey as it is the main route from the CBD (1 mark, explanation). The quietest time in Main Street is between 9am and 10am (0 marks, repeat point) because most people are at work by this time (1 mark, explanation).</p> <p>This answer has been allocated 14 marks for description and 5 marks for explanation. The maximum number of marks which can be awarded for description in this section is 3 therefore this answer scores 8 marks.</p> <p>Total mark awarded: 14/20</p>

Instructions for candidates

This assessment applies to the assignment for National 5 Geography.

This assignment is worth 20 marks. The marks contribute 20% of the overall marks for the course assessment.

The assignment has two stages:

- ◆ research
- ◆ assessment: writing a report of your findings under supervision

In this assignment, you have to demonstrate your ability to apply your skills, knowledge and understanding to researching a geographical topic or issue of your choice. This may be related to areas you have studied in class, or you may choose to research any relevant topic or issue.

The task assesses the following skills, knowledge and understanding:

- ◆ choosing, with minimum support, an appropriate geographical topic or issue
- ◆ collecting information from a limited range of sources of information
- ◆ processing the information gathered, using geographical skills/techniques
- ◆ drawing on knowledge and understanding to explain and analyse key features of the topic or issue
- ◆ reaching a well-supported conclusion, supported by evidence about the topic or issue studied

You must produce a report of your research and findings. You must complete this report within one hour. This can be a continuous period of time or split over a number of lessons.

If your report is produced over a number of lessons, then your teacher or lecturer will keep your work and store it securely between lessons.

You will work independently in direct sight of your teacher or lecturer. Your teacher or lecturer is not allowed to assist you in writing your report. You should not communicate with any other candidate.

If your report is word-processed, your centre must ensure that you do not have access to the internet or any other files (either on hard drives or portable storage).

You will be able to refer to Processed Information, collected during your research, as you write your report. This Processed Information should be no more than two single sides of A4 paper or one single side of A3 paper. You will submit this Processed Information along with your report to SQA for marking. If you do not submit Processed Information, you will lose 4 marks.

Your teacher or lecturer will let you know how the assessment will be carried out and any required conditions for doing it.

Choosing a suitable geographical topic or issue

The geographical topic or issue you choose should allow you to:

- ◆ carry out research on a geographical issue
- ◆ gather information in two different ways

You have a wide choice of possible topics to research. You can research something you have studied in class, or a topic or issue of personal interest. It can be local or based on something further afield.

Good topics for research allow you to gather data or information which you can then process. This allows you to reach your own original conclusions based on your findings. It is easier to write a good report on a topic which has generated clear results, so that you can comment on and explain these findings, rather than just making descriptive points.

It is helpful if you have a very clear idea of what you are trying to find out. This might be a research question, or question(s) or statement(s) which you try to prove or disprove.

Your teacher or lecturer may support you by commenting on the suitability of your chosen topic or issue, and can advise you on the likely availability of relevant resources.

Collecting information from at least two sources

Once you are clear about the topic or issue you are going to research, you can begin to collect information. You must use at least two different methods of collecting information. These could be from primary sources or from secondary sources. It is vital that you keep a record of all the sources you use.

Examples of primary sources (ie original information you have gathered yourself):

- ◆ surveys
- ◆ questionnaires/interviews
- ◆ letters/e-mails
- ◆ field sketches/field trips
- ◆ measurements (eg weather or river flow data)

Examples of secondary sources:

- ◆ maps
- ◆ websites
- ◆ newspapers/magazines/books
- ◆ television programmes/video/DVD/digital streaming
- ◆ radio/podcasts

Using geographical skills/techniques to process the information you have gathered

Once you have gathered your information you should use your geographical skills/techniques to process your findings. This might involve the use of a variety of different techniques depending on the nature of your research. Your results could be displayed in the form of:

- ◆ tables or graphs
- ◆ annotated field sketches
- ◆ pie charts
- ◆ land use maps
- ◆ annotated cross-sections
- ◆ photographs

or any combination of these.

At this stage it is important to consider which of these results (Processed Information) you are going to take into the assessment. You should take two different examples of results you have gathered. You must be able to fit your chosen information on to two single sides of A4 paper or one single side of A3 paper. It is important that this Processed Information is clearly labelled, as it is submitted as part of your assessment (although the Processed Information itself will not be marked). Make sure you understand the guidance on Processed Information below.

Describing and explaining the main findings of your research

You must describe and explain clearly the main things you have found as a result of carrying out your research.

If your research has been thorough, the results of your assignment should be clear to you, and it is your task to convey these results as clearly as possible.

To gain full marks, you must refer to the Processed Information which you have taken into the assessment (although you must not copy large chunks of data from this). You could quote selected information/facts/statistics from your Processed Information in order to convey your main findings. Your description and explanation of the main findings should link clearly to the issue or topic you have researched.

Giving a conclusion based on your geographical knowledge and the evidence gathered during your research

The final part of your assignment is to come to a conclusion about the topic or issue which you have researched.

This involves interpreting or highlighting the main results of your research by making judgements linked to your findings. For example, you could:

- ◆ make a decision or recommendation about your topic or issue
- ◆ explain the most important things you found out in your research
- ◆ provide answers to the question(s) you set yourself at the start of your research
- ◆ say whether or not the statement you started with has been proved or disproved

Processed Information

You can take Processed Information you have collected during the research stage of the assignment into the assessment stage. You should refer to this Processed Information to support your report, but you must not copy large chunks from it. You will gain marks for how well you use the evidence from your Processed Information in your report.

You should make sure that the evidence you take in shows information you have gathered from two different sources.

Some examples of the sort of Processed Information you can take in are:

- ◆ an annotated photograph(s) or field sketch(s)
- ◆ an annotated cross-section or land use map
- ◆ a table(s) or graph(s) showing figures about your topic or issue
- ◆ an example of a questionnaire you used to survey shoppers about traffic problems, together with details of the number of people surveyed
- ◆ a letter, with questions, you sent to the local council planning department
- ◆ a reply you received in response to your letter with key information highlighted
- ◆ a screenshot of a list of websites you found using a search engine with the most relevant ones highlighted
- ◆ a newspaper article with key points underlined
- ◆ a copy of notes you made from watching a video/TV programme/DVD relevant to your topic or issue
- ◆ field notes made on location

It is important that the evidence you bring into the assessment has been processed by you and that you have made it unique and have not just photocopied findings from a secondary source without at least annotating them in some way.

Working with others

While you should choose your own topic to research, others in your class may have chosen a similar topic. You might want to work with others for part of the time, when you are collecting information. If you choose to do this, it is important that you are able to show what you have contributed to this part of your assignment, and that the Processed Information you take into the assessment is your own work.

Administrative information

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History of changes

Version	Description of change	Date
1.0	This document replaces the previous version dated September 2016. Document formatted to match latest template and writing style. Percentage of overall mark contribution for the assignment amended. No other content changes.	September 2017
2.0	Penalty for non-submission of Processed Information added to 'Instructions for teachers and lecturers' and 'Instructions for candidates' section.	July 2019
3.0	Instructions for candidates updated to clarify that the report can be completed during a continuous period of time or split over a number of lessons.	May 2024
3.1	In the detailed marking instructions table, the following sentence in the marking instructions for 1B now reads: If candidates do not refer to Processed Information in their descriptions and explanations, or if no Processed Information is included, award up to a maximum of 10 marks . Minor formatting changes made for accessibility reasons.	September 2024

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