

# Specification Comparison

An overview of the reformed specifications compared to the existing WJEC GCSE specification.

GCSE Geography A	What remains the same?	What is changing?
<b>Aims</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The qualification continues to encourage an enquiry approach to issues-based geography</li> <li>Excellent progression to A level</li> </ul>	
<b>Content</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is still a mixture of core themes and options which provides a degree of choice and flexibility for teachers.</li> <li>Tectonics remains as an area of content, albeit as an option rather than a core theme.</li> <li>Teachers should be able to use some existing resources and lessons especially for themes like coasts, rivers and economic development.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There are fewer options in the new specification and the number of marks available for these options is proportionally lower than in the existing specification.</li> <li>Some themes that are currently optional are now core themes. These include weather and climate, ecosystems and urban change.</li> <li>There is a slightly greater focus on knowledge and understanding of the geography of the UK.</li> <li>Students must have the opportunity to take part in <b>two</b> contrasting fieldwork enquiries outside of the school grounds</li> </ul>
<b>Assessment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Components 1 and 2 each assess a mixture of human and physical themes in a similar style to current Units 1 and 2.</li> <li>Longer, theme based questions will continue to use some scaffolding and include shorter, low tariff items as well as items with a higher tariff that require extended writing.</li> <li>The accuracy of spelling, punctuation and grammar will continue to be assessed by 'SPaG' marks that are added to the tariff of <b>three</b> extended responses, one in each component.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grades 9-1 rather than A*-G.</li> <li>The qualification is non-tiered rather than tiered.</li> <li>Assessment is by examination only. Fieldwork is assessed as part of Component 3 rather than by controlled assessment.</li> <li>There are <b>four</b> assessment objectives (rather than three) because knowledge (AO1) has been separated from understanding (AO2).</li> <li>The wording of AO3 (the application of knowledge and understanding) has implications for greater student involvement in the enquiry process and decision making than at present.</li> <li>All higher tariff questions worth 8 marks (in Components 1 and 2) and 12 marks (in Component 3) will assess AO3. This means that extended writing no longer rewards 'case study' knowledge.</li> </ul>