# Government of South Australia LogoSACE Board Logo2024 Geography Subject Assessment Advice

Overview

1. This subject assessment advice, based on the 2024 assessment cycle, gives an overview of how students performed in their school and external assessments in relation to the learning requirements, assessment design criteria, and performance standards set out in the relevant subject outline. It provides information and advice regarding the assessment types, the application of the performance standards in school and external assessments, and the quality of student performance.
2. The Subject Renewal program has introduced changes for many subjects in 2025; these changes are detailed in the change log at the front of each subject outline. When reviewing the 2024 subject assessment advice, it is important to consider any updates to this subject to ensure the feedback in this document remains accurate.

School Assessment

Teachers can improve the moderation process and the online process by:

* thoroughly checking that all grades entered in Schools Online are correct
* ensuring all assessment tasks for skills and applications tasks are uploaded and that all multimodal formats have been downloaded and are playable
* in cases where student work is scanned, ensuring the uploaded tasks are legible, all facing up (and all the same way), and that blank pages, student notes, and formula pages are removed
* including the correct assessment task sheets and learning and assessment plan.

Assessment Type 1: Skills and Application Tasks

1. Students are required to produce four skills and applications tasks to demonstrate their geographical knowledge and understanding and skills. The tasks must be related to aspects of the topics studied and must include:

* one task from Topic 2: Climate change
* one task from Topic 4: Globalisation
* one task from Topic 5: Transforming global inequality
* one task from any topic or with a focus on geographical skills or fieldwork.

1. Teachers can elicit more successful responses by:

* allowing opportunities for students to demonstrate case study knowledge and providing choice in locations and geographical concepts to be investigated
* providing assessment tasks that enable students to present and analyse patterns using geographical understanding
* focusing on contemporary issues in relation to each of the assessable topics providing choice and opportunities for students to present their assessments in a variety of formats
* designing assessment tasks that enable students to demonstrate their understanding and application of spatial technologies in their responses.

The more successful responses commonly:

* used a variety of visual representations, including maps, diagrams, graphs and annotations, and data to support their written work, these were referenced often in the written or oral explanations
* used GIS and spatial technologies to generate their own maps specific to the concepts being explained and analysed in their work
* provided contemporary and up-to-date information and statistics relating to the geographical concepts being assessed, particularly in Climate Change, Globalisation and Global Inequalities. Made clever comment about relevant global events of 2024
* explained in detail patterns shown in data, maps, and graphs, and used annotations to effectively illustrate these patterns
* demonstrated detailed knowledge of case studies, using an appropriate range of statistics and data to back up knowledge of a variety of locations and issues.

The less successful responses commonly:

* did not assess the specific assessment criteria of the task
* were broad-based topics which were often not clear and with only fleeting reference to specific case study information
* were descriptive and veered towards recount, outlining rather than explaining key points, and lacked depth in analysis
* made only superficial reference to geographical concepts and provided limited analysis of the interconnections between humans and the environment
* lacked data and statistics to support knowledge and understanding and in some instances had no reference list or referencing throughout.

Assessment Type 2: Fieldwork Report

1. Students are required to produce an individual fieldwork report based on data collected independently. The basis of this report should be the analysis of the data collected with secondary sources used only to help illustrate this analysis. The focus should be on a range of presentation and analysis techniques to demonstrate and analyse patterns in the collected data and to answer or respond to the research question or hypothesis.
2. Teachers can elicit more successful responses by:

* ensuring students have selected a topic which enables them to collect sufficient primary data using a wide range of fieldwork techniques
* ensuring students have a research question or hypothesis to answer
* ensuring students are confident in a wide range of primary data collection techniques for investigating both human and physical geography concepts
* ensuring students are confident in a wide range of presentation and analysis techniques, including the use of GIS and spatial technologies.

The more successful responses commonly:

* included a clear hypothesis or research question to respond to, with a topic that was direct, clear, and able to be fully investigated
* made reference to the hypothesis or research question throughout the report and directly concluded the question or hypothesis at the end of the report
* included strong geographical background or context to their topic and spent time explaining this in the introduction
* relevant geographical concepts were clearly identified and supported by geographical theory
* included a wide variety of primary data collection techniques, and the data collected formed the basis for analysis of patterns and results, and was supported by secondary information
* used GIS and spatial technologies to create maps, locational proportional symbols, and heat maps; these enabled deeper analysis of spatial patterns and were referred to throughout the report
* effectively used statistical testing to prove or disprove hypotheses and enable analysis to the highest standard
* provided a clear conclusion which summarised the main findings and where appropriate provided recommendations for improvement.

The less successful responses commonly:

* were based on a broad topic area rather than a specific question thus making it difficult for students to analyse data in depth
* did not include background geography and therefore lacked context for the fieldwork question or hypothesis
* resembled the previous inquiry task from the old subject outline rather than a fieldwork report, primarily due to the lack of primary data collection. These cases tended to be less local and therefore difficult to provide context for, and provide conclusions or recommendations
* primary data collection was limited and in cases only included low order techniques such as photos, basic mapping, and/or some type of count, for example traffic
* lacked detailed analysis, primarily due to the lack of data collected in the field and a reliance on secondary data
* provided limited presentation techniques, largely graphs and some annotation of photos and maps, which in turn made it difficult for students to provide deep analysis of results and patterns
* lacked structure and understanding of underlying geographical concepts and theoretical geography, resulting in poorly defined purpose and conclusions.

External Assessment

Assessment Type 4: Examination

Question 1a

1. Students needed to correctly identify the photograph as being taken from the east to secure 1 mark.

Question 1b

1. Approximately half identified the correct longitude, but many students did not appear to understand the difference between longitude and latitude.

Question 1c

1. Most students correctly read across the cross-section to identify BDAC as the answer.

Question 1d

1. The most successful students used map evidence to correctly identify changes in direction, elevation, or land cover with a majority able to use the map broadly to identify change.
2. Those using specific evidence were able to access all marks available, either referring to specific changes in direction, tracks travelling through valleys to avoid changes in environment, or specific change in vegetation as shown on map legend.

Question 2a

1. Most students used a wide range of map evidence to evaluate suitability. Positive factors such as flat land, water access, access to different forms of transportation, and a workforce, and negative features such as potential of water and air pollution and close proximity of populations were identified by most. A majority of students identified both positive and negative factors to ensure evaluation had occurred.

Question 2b

1. Most students correctly identified changes such as the size of the lagoon being reduced, an increase in features related to industry and port activity, new navigation channels, and flattening of land.

Question 3a

1. i. Successful students were able to identify the location, but there was some misunderstanding of the concept of distribution. Relatively few students referred to directions or quartiles.
2. ii. A majority of students were able to identify a range of positive and negative features to form evaluation. The use of spatial patterns, clear colours to identify different levels of vegetation, and other features shown on the satellite image that may influence vegetation were all positive features. A lack of scale of orientation, inconsistent ranges on the legend, and features shown on the legend that were not on the map were all identified as negative features.
3. iii. Most students suggested a valid alternate method to present vegetation data, with most successful responses providing clear justification. Transects and a range of graphs and photographic evidence were common justified examples.

Question 4a

1. A majority of students identified people counts or pedestrian counts as the relevant technique.

Question 4b

1. Most students correctly matched 3 to B and 2 to F.

Question 4c

1. A majority of students provided a justification that related to testing how effective protective measures/infrastructure are in protecting dunes.

Question 4d

1. Successful responses referred to specific techniques such as use of quadrats, transects, or biodiversity indexes.

Question 4e

1. A majority of students provided a valid suggestion to ensure validity with common references to different times of the year, using numerous locations or equal distances.

Question 4f

Many students were not specific enough in their responses for this question, referring only to surveys with no indication of who and what was being surveyed. More successful responses referred to interviewing business owners or surveying beach users.

Question 5a and b

1. Many students misunderstood the key concepts surrounding ecosystem services. Numerous responses referred to tennis courts and water tanks. Many students did make links to recreational services such walking tracks. Relatively few responses referred to benefits to humans of nutrient cycling, soil stability, and water regulation and purification.

Question 6a

1. Successful students correctly explained at least one impact between different pairs of components within the ecosystem model. More popular responses referred to removal of vegetation leading to high levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. Successful students also included responses that related to compaction of soil and removal of root systems for stability, or reductions in evapotranspiration or increased runoff.

Question 6b

1. Successful students identified three ways land cover change impacted the total ecological footprint of the city and demonstrated a clear understanding of what makes up an ecological footprint. Whilst many students identified increased carbon emissions in their responses, the less successful responses did not refer to built land, the provision required for more cropland and grazing land, and use of timber for building resources. Many incorrectly talked about removal of native vegetation, which relates to reduced biocapacity.

Question 6c

1. Most students provided two valid strategies to reduce ecological footprints and/or improve sustainability of ecosystems, although not all were government related. Good examples that were explained by students included:

* moves to support renewable energy
* improvements to public transport
* initiatives and campaigns to reduce food waste.

Question 7a

1. (i) Successful students correctly identified push factors such as a lack of education, poor wages, or tough living conditions. Some students confused push and pull factors in their responses.
2. (ii) Most students correctly identified a push factor associated with forced migrations, with many referencing conflict and natural disasters.

Question 7b

1. A majority of students correctly identified that educated markets would bring new skills. Successful students followed this up with reference to either economic growth or increased competition for local workforces.

Question 7c

1. Whilst most students were able to explain some impacts of outward migration on an origin country or region, responses were often vague without specific case study examples or lacked evaluation in the form of positive and negative effects with a concluding statement. Many responses referred to effects on destination countries. Successful responses were balanced, referring to positive factors such as a remittance, reduced pressure on resources, reduced unemployment, rise in the status of women, brain gain as migrants arrive home with new skills, and improved cultural, economic, and diplomatic links with other countries. Negative effects such as a reduced economic activity, a lack of services, decline of regions, and splitting up of families were also explained with supporting case study information.

Question 8a

1. Around half of students correctly defined Total Fertility Rate as the average number of babies a woman has in her lifetime. Many incorrectly referred to birth rates.

Question 8b

1. (i) A majority of students identified a factor such as marriage later in life, high levels of divorce, career aspirations, high costs of raising a child, high levels of women’s empowerment, or very easy access to family planning, with varying levels of explanation.
2. (ii) Students were less successful in relation to Economically Developing Countries, although many identified lower infant mortality rates and increased family planning, and provided valid explanations. Many incorrectly referred to people being too poor to have children.

Question 9

1. Most students correctly explained a physical factor and influence on global population distribution, with common responses including access to fresh water, settlement on coastlines, and climatic conditions.