Your notes

GCSE Geography: revision notes

Geographical fieldwork

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Planning an enquiry

- (AQA) AQA students carry out two enquiries in contrasting environments: one physical (such as a river or beach) and one human (such as a town centre).
- The stages: 1) a suitable question or **hypothesis**; 2) collecting data; 3) presenting data; 4) analysing and explaining the results; 5) reaching conclusions; 6) evaluating the enquiry.
- A good question can be tested with data and links to geographical theory, such as 'Does the river get wider and deeper downstream?'
- A **risk assessment** lists the hazards (such as slippery rocks and deep water at a river, or traffic in a town) and how to reduce each one.

Collecting data

- **Primary data** is collected by you: measurements (river width, depth and velocity), counts (pedestrians or traffic), questionnaires, environmental quality surveys, field sketches and photographs.
- **Secondary data** was collected by someone else: census data, maps, websites and river-level records.
- Sampling: random (every point has an equal chance of being chosen), systematic (at regular intervals, such as every 50 m) and stratified (in proportion to the groups in the population). Larger samples are usually more reliable.
- **Quantitative data** is numbers. **Qualitative data** is descriptions, opinions and images.

Presenting and analysing data

- Choose suitable graphs and maps: line graphs, bar charts, scatter graphs, cross-sections, choropleth maps and proportional symbols.
- Describe patterns and trends using figures, point out anomalies, and explain the results using geographical ideas.

Conclusions and evaluation

- Answer the question: was the **hypothesis** supported? Use evidence from your results.
- Evaluate: problems with the methods (such as a small sample, the weather, the time of day or equipment errors), how reliable the results and conclusions are, and how the enquiry could be improved.

Key terms

Hypothesis	A statement that can be tested with data.
Primary data	Data you collect yourself.
Secondary data	Data that has been collected by someone else.
Risk assessment	A plan that identifies hazards and how to reduce them.
Random sampling	Choosing sample points so each has an equal chance of being picked.
Systematic sampling	Collecting data at regular intervals.
Stratified sampling	Sampling in proportion to the groups within a population.
Quantitative data	Data in the form of numbers.
Qualitative data	Data in the form of descriptions, opinions or images.
Anomaly	A result that doesn't fit the overall pattern.

Quick questions

Cover the answers and test yourself: remembering is what makes it stick.

1. What is a hypothesis?
2. What is primary data?
3. Which of these is secondary data?
4. What is systematic sampling?
5. What is a risk assessment?
6. What is qualitative data?
7. Which equipment measures river velocity?
8. What is an anomaly?

Answers

1. A statement that can be tested, such as 'the river gets wider downstream'
2. Data you collect yourself
3. Census statistics
4. Collecting data at regular intervals
5. Identifying the hazards and how to reduce them
6. Descriptions and opinions rather than numbers
7. A flow meter, or a float and a stopwatch
8. A result that doesn't fit the pattern

Your notes

What to do next

Practise 12 questions on this topic

Try 4 exam questions, with mark schemes

Read the lesson, one step at a time

Free revision for GCSE and KS3 at lycolearn.co.uk. Some notes are for one exam board only, and say so in brackets.

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