Your notes

GCSE Geography: revision notes

Natural hazards and risk

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What a natural hazard is

- A **natural hazard** is a natural process that could cause death, injury, or damage to property and the environment. When it does cause serious harm, it becomes a **natural disaster**.
- **Tectonic hazards** come from movements of the Earth's crust: earthquakes, volcanic eruptions and tsunamis. **Weather hazards** come from the atmosphere: tropical storms, droughts, floods, heatwaves and extreme cold.

Hazard risk

- **Hazard risk** is the probability (chance) that a **natural hazard** will affect people.
- Population growth puts more people in places at risk. **Urbanisation** packs people into cities, sometimes built on floodplains or steep slopes.
- Poverty means poorly built homes, fewer warnings and less money to prepare, move away or recover. Farming draws people to risky places with fertile land, such as volcanic slopes and floodplains.
- Climate change may make extreme weather, such as droughts, floods and storms, more frequent or more intense.

Vulnerability

- **Vulnerability** is how easily people and places are harmed by a hazard. Poorer, older and less prepared people are more vulnerable.
- The same hazard can have very different effects in a rich country and a poor one. Wealth pays for strong buildings, warning systems, emergency services and rebuilding.

Key terms

Natural hazard	A natural process that could cause death, injury or damage.

Natural disaster	A natural hazard that has caused serious harm to people or property.
Hazard risk	The probability that a natural hazard will affect people.
Vulnerability	How easily people and places are harmed by a hazard.
Tectonic hazard	A hazard caused by movements of the Earth's crust, such as an earthquake.
Weather hazard	A hazard caused by the atmosphere, such as a tropical storm or drought.
Urbanisation	The growth of the proportion of people living in towns and cities.

Your notes

Quick questions

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

1. What is a natural hazard?
2. When does a natural hazard become a natural disaster?
3. Which of these is a tectonic hazard?
4. Which of these is a weather hazard?
5. What is hazard risk?
6. How does urbanisation increase hazard risk?
7. Why does poverty increase hazard risk?
8. Why do farmers live near volcanoes despite the risk?

Answers

1. A natural process that could cause death, injury or damage
2. When it causes serious harm to people or property
3. An earthquake
4. A tropical storm
5. The chance that a hazard will affect people
6. More people live closely together, sometimes on floodplains or steep slopes
7. Homes are poorly built, and people can't afford to prepare or move away
8. Volcanic soils are very fertile

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

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