Your notes

GCSE Geography: revision notes

Rural environments and farming

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Start here: biomes and what they give us

- A **biome** is a large ecosystem with its own climate, plants and animals: tropical, temperate and boreal forests, tropical and temperate grasslands, deserts and tundra.
- Natural ecosystems provide goods and services: timber, food, energy, water, medicines, places for tourism, protection from floods and erosion, and they store carbon, which helps control the climate.
- People change ecosystems to farm. **Arable farming** grows crops; **pastoral farming** rears animals. Commercial farming sells for profit; **subsistence farming** feeds the farmer's family. Intensive farming uses a lot of money or labour on a small area; extensive farming uses large areas with less input.

Rural change in a developed country: the UK

- Fewer people work on farms because of machinery, so jobs and young people leave some villages. Shops, schools, bus services and post offices close, which makes the area less attractive and more people leave: the **negative multiplier effect**.
- Rural isolation affects older people and those without a car.
- **Counter-urbanisation** brings commuters and retired people into villages near cities and in attractive areas, which raises house prices. Second homes and holiday cottages, such as in Cornwall or the Lake District, can leave villages empty in winter.

Rural change in a developing country

- In countries such as India and Kenya, population growth means farmland is divided into smaller plots, and many farmers can't make a living.

- Natural hazards such as drought and floods destroy crops, and young people move to the cities to find work (rural-urban migration), leaving older people and women to farm.
- Farms are changing: some grow cash crops for export, and large companies buy land, while others stay subsistence farms.

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Making rural areas sustainable

- Farmers diversify to earn new income: farm shops, holiday cottages, camping, specialist or organic food, and GM crops that resist pests or drought.
- Sustainable strategies improve water supplies (wells and rainwater tanks), soil (crop rotation and planting trees), crop yields (drip irrigation and better seeds), health care, transport and broadband, and give small loans (microfinance) to start businesses.

Key terms

Biome	A large ecosystem with its own climate, plants and animals.
Arable farming	Growing crops.
Pastoral farming	Rearing animals.
Subsistence farming	Growing food to feed the farmer's own family.
Counter-urbanisation	People moving from cities to the countryside.
Negative multiplier effect	When the loss of jobs and services leads to more people leaving, and more losses.
Diversification	A farm starting new activities to earn more income.

Quick questions

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

1. Which is a biome?
2. What is pastoral farming?
3. What is subsistence farming?
4. Which is a service that a natural ecosystem provides?
5. What is counter-urbanisation?
6. What is the negative multiplier effect in a village?
7. Why can second homes harm a village?
8. Why are farms getting smaller in parts of India and Kenya?

Answers

1. Tropical rainforest
2. Rearing animals
3. Growing food to feed the farmer's own family

4. Protection from floods
5. People moving from cities to the countryside
6. Losing jobs and services makes more people leave
7. They raise house prices and leave villages empty in winter
8. Land is divided as the population grows

What to do next

Practise 10 questions on this topic

Try 3 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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