Why teach WJEC Geography B?

WJEC GCSE Geography Specification B is one of two new ‘strengthened’ GCSE Geography courses offered by WJEC. The specification has evolved from the popular Avery Hill specification and shares the same ethos of student-centred geographical enquiry.

GCSE Geography B focuses the minds of students on the geographical issues that are relevant to their generation. Students have the opportunity to consider stakeholder views on a variety of geographical issues and, in doing so, become knowledgeable, yet critical, geographers.

One distinctive feature of the specification is the opportunity for students to develop and refine their problem solving and decision making skills, skills that are assessed through external assessment in Unit 2B.

WJEC offers quick and friendly support from a highly experienced team. Andy Owen taught Avery Hill geography for nearly 20 years before becoming Subject Officer. Andrew Williams has been the Subject Support Officer for Avery Hill coursework, and then WJEC Geography B controlled assessment for a similar length of time. We are always happy to respond to your queries.

How has the specification been amended for teaching in September 2012?

The amended specification places a stronger emphasis on the understanding of physical processes in the environment, as well as the management (and mismanagement) of the physical environment. As such, this GCSE provides an excellent platform for A level geography.

The content of the specification has been substantially rewritten to clarify expectation of both the depth and breadth of study. It now includes six generic case studies for each of the three themes. These provide an outline of what must be taught, but the locational context of each will still be decided by individual teachers / centres.

The number of controlled assessment tasks has been reduced from two to one.
Unit 1  WJEC GCSE Geography

Specification B is divided into three compulsory themes. The first two of these are examined in Unit 1. The content of these two themes is summarised below.

We recommend you spend between 35 and 40 hours teaching each of these themes. However, if you base the controlled assessment task on a Unit 1 theme, you will need to spend more time on this component.

Theme 1. Challenges of living in a built environment

- Quality of life / access to housing
- Access to / changing service provision
- Urbanisation
- Planning issues in built environments
- Rural change & planning issues

Theme 2. Physical processes and relationships between people and environments

- Weather and climate
- Ecosystems
- The issue of desertification
- River processes / landforms
- Coastal processes / management

Unit 1 is assessed by a 1 hour paper. It is worth 30% of the total marks.

The paper consists of two compulsory questions, each worth 30 marks.

The specification lists six generic case studies in each theme which must be covered. Each question in the Unit 1 exam concludes with a piece of extended writing on a ‘case study’. Candidates will have a choice from two case study questions.
Unit 2 is assessed by an externally set exam consisting of two distinct parts. Overall, Unit 2 is worth 45% of the total marks.

Unit 2A is a 30 minute paper which assesses the content of theme 3. The style of assessment of this paper is similar to Unit 1. The content of this theme is summarised below.

We recommend you spend between 35 and 40 hours teaching this theme unless you base your controlled assessment task on this theme, in which case you will need to spend more time on this component.

Unit 2B is a 1 hour 30 minute paper. It is a problem solving paper and may assess knowledge and understanding of any part of the specification.

The problem solving paper has a rich heritage in Avery Hill geography and is one distinctive feature of this specification. The paper presents a problem (in an unfamiliar context) and explores two or more options for its solution. Candidates need to select their preferred option and justify their decision in a piece of extended writing. It is an excellent example of geographical application in action.

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Controlled Assessment
Candidates complete one controlled assessment task based on a fieldwork enquiry. It is worth 25% of the total marks.

Six generic tasks (two for each theme) are published by WJEC annually, giving an opportunity for centres to select and contextualise a task that is appropriate for its resources and its students' needs.

The specification offers plenty of opportunities for either physical or human geography fieldwork. WJEC will continue to offer advice to all centres about the development of controlled assessment tasks.

### Generic tasks for the fieldwork enquiry (for award in 2014)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generic task</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Key Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Investigate spatial variations in quality of life.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investigate the distribution of retail services.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investigate variation of river processes and landforms along a river channel.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.2 &amp; 4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investigate the strategies needed to manage an area of eroding coastline.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investigate factors that determine the location of secondary industry.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investigate the impact of tertiary economic activity on people and the environment.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What’s the difference between WJEC GCSE Geography A and WJEC GCSE Geography B?