

Geographical Place

“Place is security, space is freedom.” Yi-Fu Tuan

‘Place’ is vital to the study of geography, therefore it is vital for you throughout your A level studies.

Geographical Place

This resource will develop the skills associated with studying Geographical Place.

The focus will be A level case studies. It will look at:

- why 'place' is so important
- how to research a useful case study
- how to structure a good case study
- how to use case studies effectively
- how to develop synoptic links within a case study, across more than one topic.

Why 'place' is so important

Question: **what is 'place'?**

Is it this?

Place describes the physical and human characteristics of a location.

Or is it this?

More than a physical location, a place is a space given meaning(s) by people.

So our perception of place varies from person to person.

Detailed, highly relevant and appropriate knowledge and understanding of place(s) and environments used throughout.

(AO1)

Taken from a generic mark scheme from an A level exam board (AQA). This is from the criteria for a Level 4 response to get 16–20 marks for 20 questions.

Tip: so **'place'** is a vital component for a top-level answer.

How to research a useful case study

Discuss:

Question: Why do A level geography students need to know about place?

There are loads of great reasons, the most obvious being it is a vital component of the geography exam, therefore geography students need to know about a wide range of places. Examiners are looking for that 'sense of place', a feeling that the student has actually experienced that place or studied it in depth.

And places are fascinating.

Question: How can geographers investigate place?

Again, there are many different ways, for example through fieldwork, research, personal experiences and media representation.

Question: What is the most likely form a 'place' study will take?

A great case study.

How to research a useful case study

Tips

- Before you start looking for any information, be clear on the purpose of the research. E.g. rather than just thinking “*I am going to find out about the Christchurch earthquake in New Zealand*”, it is more effective to think “*I am going to find out about the: location, causes, impacts and responses to the Christchurch earthquake*”.
- Believe it or not, there other sources of information apart from Google! Sometimes using a good textbook can be so much easier than trawling the Internet and often more time-efficient.
- There are a number of very good sources of georgical information that you or your teacher will have access to. Try these first – e.g. Geofiles, Geography review, TED lectures, *Geography Magazine*.
- Beware of ‘*fake geography*’ – do not believe everything you read on the Internet, be critical of the source and the information.
- Use the highlighter sparingly – the information may be interesting, but if it is not relevant to your purpose it is not needed. Refer to your list of key things you need to find out about, and stick to it, stay focused.
- Memory in most people is aided by a visual stimulus, so a map or photo is good idea, especially for revision. Or if you are ‘arty’ try drawing your own pictures or images.

How to structure a good case study

Location | Study

A map.
Scale:
local,
national
and
global.

Historical Context

political systems,
economic
development,
demographic
change,
deindustrialisation
n religion and
social conditions.
'Change over
time' is key to
widen your
understanding.

Concepts and processes

E.g. hydrology =
rainfall, geology,
human activity,
size of the
catchment area
and relief.

E.g. how a place
changes over time
=
deindustrialisation
regeneration,
glocalisation and
migration.

Stakeholders

Key players:
include a
range of
different
scales – e.g.
local, regional,
national or
global.

Organisations
– e.g. NGOs,
IGOs, TNCs,
Trade Blocs.

Individuals:
Bill Gates,
Theresa May

Synoptic Links

Geographical
thinking, finding
links across
topics to
demonstrate
understanding.

Be evaluative , make a judgment

E.g.
greatest
impact,
least
effective,
most
influential.

How to structure a good case study

You might want to sort your case study information into sections (see below).

Tip: the most important part of this method is to think carefully about the headings for the boxes. A good place to find ideas is the exam specification or your PLCs. Your case study needs to provide the evidence that you require to answer the question set in the exam.

Causes – significance?

Impacts (long- and short-term)

Theory – usefulness?

**Seismic Case Study
Nepal 2015**

Location – influential?

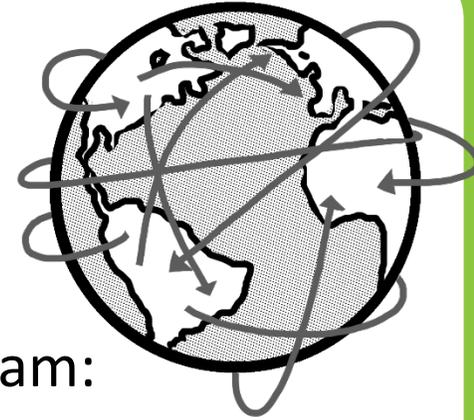
Responses – effective or not?

Links within hazards. Links to other topics.

Weaker responses continue to drift into prior knowledge and learned case studies rather than focusing on specific questions.

AQA examiners report.

How to use case studies effectively



It very unlikely that the examiner is going to ask you this question in the exam:

Question: *Please write everything you know about the World Trade Organisation.
Thank you.*

A more likely question is this,

Question: *For a global organisation that you have studied assess their role in the past, present and future of globalisation.*

Question: If the question you are most likely to face about global organisations is going to read like this, then doesn't it make sense that your case study is structured in such a way that these questions are more straight forward for you to answer?

Tip: Be more evaluative when you write your case study.

How to use case studies effectively

An example of an evaluative case study

Who are they?

It is an organisation for making trade easier between nations

It is a forum for governments to negotiate trade agreements.

Governments try to sort out the trade problems they face with each other.

Advantages

Helps promote peace between nations.

Handles disputes constructively.

Implementing rules make business easier.

Stimulates economic growth.

Encourages good governance.

What do they do?

Administer WTO trade agreements.

Provide a forum for trade negotiations.

Handle trade disputes.

Monitor national trade policies.

Offer technical assistance and training for developing countries.

Co-operate with other international organisations.

Disadvantages

It is undemocratic (big companies and influential governments dictate policy).

It does not ensure security (only trade).

Trade rules are unfavourable towards developing countries and hinder growth.

WTO usually favours multinationals.

It only cares about companies, not people.

Tip: Sorting information and then using different colours can help when recalling information .

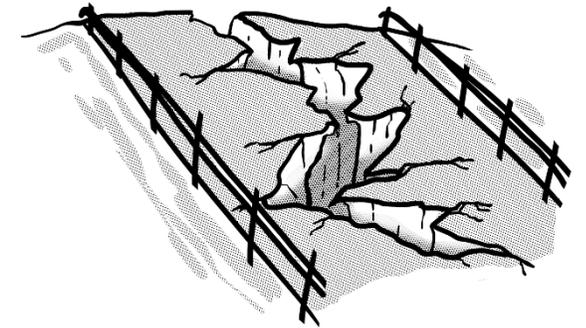
How to use case studies effectively

It is a useful exercise to list all of the possible places where you might be able to use each of your case studies in an exam. It will save you time in an exam and avoid “*umm which case study shall I use for this question?*”.

Example: Tohōku Earthquake – Japan 2011

Could be used:

- ✓ Earthquake hits Tokyo – impact on a major city.
- ✓ High Income Country that suffers from natural disasters.
- ✓ When a High Income Country did not cope with a tectonic hazard – this does not fit the usual pattern.
- ✓ A high magnitude event – magnitude 9.
- ✓ Secondary hazards – tsunami hits Sendai.
- ✓ Fukushima nuclear plant affected.



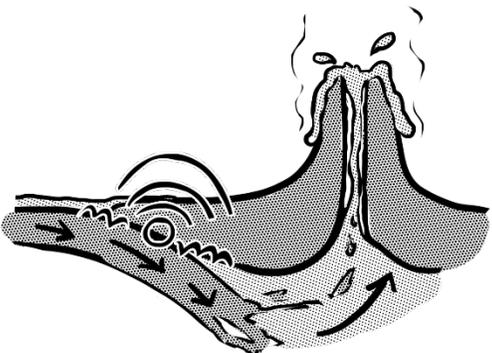
How to develop synoptic links within a case study or across more than one topic

hazards content

e.g. plate tectonic theory

e.g. causes of volcanoes

e.g. impacts of volcanoes



Possible synoptic questions (AO2)

Describe the distribution of tectonic hazards.

Explain what happens at a destructive plate boundary.

The consequences of earthquakes are more widespread than those of volcanoes. Discuss.

hazards content

e.g. pattern of plate boundaries

e.g. causes of earthquakes

e.g. impacts of earthquakes

Tip: To use a case study effectively for these questions, you need to link information from one part of the topic to another. No pigeon-holing!

How to develop synoptic links within a case study or across more than one topic

Question: Evaluate the impact that a volcanic eruption has had on the character of a place that you have studied and how the eruption has affected people's lived experience of this place afterwards.



... had positive and negatives but stopped short of linking in how the policy was sustainable or not.

Tip: To use a case study effectively for this question, you need to link information from one TOPIC to another. No pigeon-holing!

AQA examiners report.

How to develop synoptic links within a case study or across more than one topic

Here is a worked example of what the synoptic part of a case study might look like. See how this structure is all about making **links**, being **synoptic**, and that is what examiners want to see.

Changing places

Insider v. outsider perspective on place

Near places v. far places

Experienced places and media places

Endogenous (location, infrastructure economic) v. exogenous (relationships with other places)

Question: Evaluate the impact that a volcanic eruption has had on the character of a place that you have studied and how the eruption has affected people's lived experience of this place afterwards.

Being synoptic/applying knowledge

*Primary impact on people – loss of life, destroyed homes – **sadness, fear, etc.***

*Character of place – **areas uninhabitable, unsafe***

*Secondary impacts on people – evacuation, 'environmental refugees' – **unrest, upset, resilience, Insiders – songs, poems***

Outsiders – aid/tourism

*Character of place – **derelict areas, run-down***

Hazards

*Primary impacts – **pyroclastic***

Secondary lahars

Responses – short- and long-term

Risk management

Preparedness, mitigation, adaptation

Case Study: Montserrat

Parks model

Now work through the booklet to reinforce how to use case studies effectively.

Remember: 'Place' is vital to the study of geography, therefore it is vital for you throughout your A level studies.

© The PiXL Club Ltd. September 2018

This resource is strictly for the use of member schools for as long as they remain members of The PiXL Club. It may not be copied, sold, or transferred to a third party or used by the school after membership ceases. Until such time it may be freely used within the member school.

All opinions and contributions are those of the authors. The contents of this resource are not connected with, or endorsed by, any other company, organisation, or institution. These papers were made by teachers in good faith based upon our understanding to date.

PiXL Club Ltd endeavour to trace and contact copyright owners. If there are any inadvertent omissions or errors in the acknowledgements or usage, this is unintended and PiXL will remedy these on written notification.