



Questions & answers

National 5 and Higher Geography – assignment

1 General

In a developed versus developing country comparison assignment, can all pupils do the same questions but pick their own countries? Or would this be malpractice/coaching?

This would be the equivalent of all candidates doing, for example, an organised river study or an urban study, so yes that would be acceptable for an assignment using secondary data, however, candidates should decide on their own questions to research. For example, the National 5 course assessment task states the following:

- ◆ choosing, with minimum support, an appropriate geographical topic or issue
- ◆ collecting information from a limited range of sources of information
- ◆ processing the information gathered, using geographical skills/techniques
- ◆ drawing on knowledge and understanding to explain and analyse key features of the topic or issue
- ◆ reaching a well-supported conclusion, supported by evidence about the topic or issue studied

For secondary source assignments, should each candidate have a completely different topic?

This is not necessary, but candidates should have choice as to the topic they research.

Is group fieldwork okay?

Yes, but candidates must collect data and process it themselves.

If a candidate is absent for fieldwork, can they be given the data gathered?

No. In Section A candidates need to describe how they gathered data/information.

If candidates are allowed to collect data as a group, are they allowed to process the information as a group?

No.

Can virtual fieldwork be used in the classroom?

Yes.

Can the assignment be typed?

Yes, however, centres must ensure that candidates do not have access to the internet or any other files (either on hard drives or portable storage).

Can the whole class use IT to write up the assignment?

Yes, but centres must ensure that candidates do not have access to the internet or any other files (either on hard drives or portable storage).

Do candidates need to give a specific URL for a website or is the name enough?

The name is enough.

Why is 'about three years' a guide for being up to date?

It is a guide as candidates may have a good reason for using something older, eg the census, textbooks, atlases.

Does the title have to be a question or hypotheses?

No, but some candidates find it helpful to do this.

To avoid lifting from the processed information, can candidates have a scale on their graphs?

Yes, but they shouldn't put numbers at the top of bars, for example.

Would numbers around the side of a pie chart be acceptable on a PI sheet?

Yes, as long as this is a scale and not the numbers relating to each section of the pie chart.

Do PI sheets need keys eg RICEPOTS?

A key will remind candidates what each category/colour is so that they can accurately use the information they have gathered. It allows markers to check what a candidate has written.

Does a candidate have to process the information on the PI sheet into a graph, or can they use a computer programme or lift from a website?

Using a computer to process graphs is acceptable. Taking a graph from a website is secondary data and should be acknowledged.

Can pupils do a mock write up to practise timings?

Centres must make sure that they do not go beyond reasonable assistance. At any stage, reasonable assistance does not include:

- ◆ providing the topic or issue
- ◆ directing candidates to specific resources to be used
- ◆ providing model answers or writing frames specific to the task (such as outlines, paragraph headings or section headings)

- ◆ providing detailed feedback on drafts, including marking

How important are coloured PI sheets?

Coloured PI sheets are not a requirement of the assessment however, candidates need to be able to identify and interpret the information on their PI sheets. Colour allows them to do this.

Can candidates use two online sources for secondary data assignments?

Yes, as long as they are different types of source eg online newspaper and a YouTube video would be acceptable, whereas two online newspapers would not be acceptable as they are the same type of source.

Are mind maps allowed on PI sheets?

Yes.

Could you give some additional guidance as to what a conclusion mark would look like please?

To gain a concluding mark, the candidate should link the point back to their title/research question/aim.

2 National 5

If the candidate's topic is about differences, would they only get descriptive marks if they state a difference in data?

Yes.

Why are there only 3 marks for description? Does this disadvantage C candidates?

The mark allocations in the marking instructions are designed to discriminate effectively between candidates of different abilities. This ensures fairness to all candidates, including C candidates.

Can candidates pick up description marks if they do not name the graph they come from?

Yes.

Do candidates need to explain in Section A?

No.

Do they need to have location and time in Section A for a mark?

It depends what the candidate has written – there is an example on page 5 of the Coursework Assessment Task.

If candidates get a mark for describing the most vehicles, can they get another mark for describing the least number, or is this a reversal?

It is not a reversal if the candidate quotes numbers.

Do traffic and pedestrian counts count as two separate methods?

No, because they are the same method ie, they are both counts.

Can a mark be awarded for saying ‘information gathered was collated in the classroom’?

No, because this is not a geographical gathering technique.

Why do candidates lose 4 marks if there is no processed information?

Markers need to be able to see the processed information so that they can fully understand and mark candidate responses.

Does the National 5 template have to be used by candidates?

No, it is optional. They can write on paper.

We seem to be asking/accepting National 5 to evaluate their sources, which is Advanced Higher level. Why are we doing this?

Candidates are not required to evaluate their sources, however, some do make evaluative points in their responses and, because marking is positive, they can be credited.

If a candidate puts an evaluate sentence in their conclusion, is it a technique mark or a conclusion mark?

If the evaluative comment is about their techniques, then the candidate can be awarded the mark as part of Section A. Marks are awarded holistically, therefore, regardless of where the point was located in the assignment, the mark would be awarded for Section A.

Candidate 1 – why did the location get a mark for the first technique but not the second?

A mark is awarded in the first paragraph for location of two areas studied, so no marks are awarded for a repeat point about location in relation to the second technique.

3 Higher

In the Course Assessment Task, why doesn't the Higher marking instructions have a marked response?

The responses are so varied that one wasn't thought to be helpful. There are now 8 responses with marking commentaries on the Understanding Standards website to support teachers.

Do you require both a quantitative and a qualitative (eg, greater/less) component to get a PI mark?

We are looking for a developed point; this will vary according to the PI being interpreted. For graphical data, we are looking for two values along with some qualitative/comparative language. For a map this might be interpreting the frequency of, for example, a land use with some spatial information.

Any advice on how to get 2/2 for conclusion without repeating KU or Analysis?

Please refer to the examples on the US site which exemplify this.