

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Cambridge IGCSE® (9–1) Geography (0976)

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FAQs – Support and resources

When are the examinations taken?

Information about when the examinations can be taken can be found in the syllabus. You can download the syllabus from **Teacher Support**.

Examination dates are listed in the **exam timetable** which you can download from our public website, or speak to the Examinations Officer at your centre.

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What resources are available to support Cambridge syllabuses?

Teaching resources can be found on the **Teacher Support** page for your syllabus.

For syllabuses, specimen papers, past papers, maps (Paper 2 Insert 2), mark schemes and examiner reports look under the *Syllabus Materials* tab.

For support materials, including Coursework Handbook, Scheme of Work and Example Candidate Responses, look under the *Teaching Materials* tab.

The *Resource List* tab directs you to endorsed and suggested resources including textbooks and websites. You can also access these from the **Resource Centre** on our public website.

For more details about the support types available, and how to use them for planning, preparing, teaching, assessing and revision, see our guide *Cambridge teacher support*, which can be downloaded from the **Teacher Support** homepage under Teacher Support Resources.

You can also visit our **Discussion Forums**, where teachers discuss resources and teaching methods, and you can ask questions and receive a response from our subject expert moderator or from other Cambridge teachers in our Community.

Reference: Teacher Support Resources

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What textbooks are available for my subject?

From the *Resource List* tab on the **Teacher Support** page for your syllabus you can search for textbooks for your subject. No particular book is necessary for a course and teachers are advised to choose the textbook that best suits their needs. Many of our syllabuses are supported by a range of different endorsed textbooks to ensure that schools have choice. There is information on the back of endorsed textbooks about which examination series it was first produced for.

Endorsed resources go through a rigorous quality-assurance process to make sure they closely reflect the syllabus and are appropriate for Cambridge schools worldwide. Resources may be 'endorsed for full syllabus coverage' or endorsed to cover specific sections, topics or approaches. Look for the specific 'endorsed for...' logo on the resource.

Reference: Syllabus page

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What training and professional development is available for my subject?

Cambridge online and face-to-face training courses are designed to support you by providing you with the knowledge and skills required to deliver our syllabuses. These can be booked through the **Events and training calendar** on our public website.

Reference: Events and training calendar

Location: Public Website

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How can I find out about any changes to the syllabus?

This information can be found on the inside cover of the syllabus, which can be downloaded from **Teacher Support**. Changes are described in detail within this section. Throughout the syllabus, any significant changes are indicated by black vertical lines either side of the text.

If a syllabus update document is listed next to a syllabus this is notification that the syllabus has been updated to reflect a change. The changes that have been made will be clearly indicated in the syllabus update.

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What can students take into their exams?

Guidance for use of equipment in examinations, including use of dictionaries and calculators, is provided in the **Cambridge Handbook** from our public website. A list of unauthorised materials is also included.

String can be used to measure distances in Paper 2.

For help or information about administering qualifications it is often useful to speak to the Examinations Officer at your centre.

Reference: Cambridge Handbook

Location: Public Website

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How can I find more information about the IGCSE (9–1) grading system?

The grading process for 9–1 IGCSEs will be the same process we use to grade all our syllabuses.

- The standards at the thresholds of grades 7, 4 and 1 are the same as the standards at the thresholds of grades A, C and G.
- Grade boundaries for grades 8, 6, 5, 3 and 2 are set using arithmetic rules that space the grade boundaries at regular intervals between the boundaries for grades 9, 7, 4 and 1. The use of arithmetic grade boundaries is common to Cambridge and all other UK exam boards.

Reference: Grading information

Location: Public Website

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FAQs – Subject Content and Assessment

Do I need to teach the whole syllabus?

Yes, you should teach the full IGCSE Geography syllabus, and teach all topics within each theme.

If part of the syllabus is not taught this may reduce the choice of questions available in the examination and might even leave learners without any questions they can answer.

Also, topics that do not come up on Paper 1 might prove to be useful background for Papers 2 and 4, or for coursework if that option is taken.

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Can candidates use bullet points in responses?

Candidates can use bullet points in longer responses if time is short but we do not recommend this. Where longer responses are expected, development is often required in the answer to achieve higher marks and this is identified in the mark scheme. Using bullet points allows candidates to state simple points but may not allow the development required for further credit.

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FAQs – Subject Content and Assessment

How do I get my coursework proposals approved?

Centres need to submit their coursework proposals to Cambridge. These will be passed on to the Principal Moderator for comment/approval. These will then be returned to you approved or otherwise with comments from the Principal Moderator.

There is no need to re-submit every year if the proposals stay the same but if the coursework proposals change they need to be sent to Cambridge again.

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How important is it for candidates not to exceed the coursework word limit?

Coursework should not exceed the 2000 word limit. Candidates should be encouraged to develop the skill of writing with precision and succinctness.

The generic coursework mark scheme in the syllabus states under the 'Organisation and presentation' assessment criteria that to achieve Level 3 (9-12 marks) candidates need to show 'a coherent presentation using a range of appropriate techniques with accuracy and clear relevance to the aims.' Coursework which exceeds the 2000 word limit may lose focus and relevance on the route to geographical enquiry and may not achieve high marks in this, or other, assessment criteria.

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Is there an advantage in opting for Component 3 Coursework rather than Component 4 Alternative to Coursework?

There is no advantage in opting for Coursework rather than Alternative to Coursework. This is a matter of choice for individual schools and teachers.

Both components require learners to assess the significance of an event, person or development and will demonstrate the same skills and understanding. The same generic mark scheme is used for marking both components.

Coursework allows you to be involved in the assessment process, to set your own tasks and to devise your own schemes of work, and it gives your learners an opportunity to show their achievements outside the examination room. However, coursework increases the amount of work you have to do, and may be more stressful for learners who have coursework to be completed in other subjects at the same time.

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How can I be sure my learners' coursework will be acceptable to the external moderator?

Cambridge makes every effort to ensure that coursework tasks are acceptable. Once coursework tasks have been set, we urge you to send in the proposed tasks for vetting before the work is done by your learners. We forward the proposed tasks to coursework consultants who provide comments on them and, if necessary, give advice on how they could be improved.

We also offer online Coursework Training Programmes, which give you the opportunity to practice your skills within different aspects of the coursework marking process. These can be booked through the **Events and training calendar** on our public website.

However, we cannot guarantee that the level of marks awarded in any individual school will be exactly in line with the marks awarded in another school. Therefore, each year the coursework marks of some schools have to be adjusted, up or down, as a result of external moderation. If this happens, reasons are given by the moderator in a report sent to the school.

The Coursework Handbook explains this in more detail. All teachers should read the handbook carefully before starting on coursework.

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FAQs – Subject Content and Assessment

Can I adapt the mark scheme for coursework?

No, the generic mark scheme must be used exactly as it is in the syllabus.

Exactly the same mark scheme is used for marking Component 3: Coursework and Component 4: Alternative to Coursework.

The generic mark scheme is also in the Coursework Handbook where there is guidance on how to use it and sample coursework assignments with annotations and marks. All teachers should read the handbook carefully before starting on coursework.

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Most of my learners are not First Language English speakers, and their written English is not fluent. Does this disadvantage them?

No, learners are assessed on the content they produce, not on their English.

The majority of learners are not First Language English speakers, so examiners are very experienced in assessing the work of learners whose English is in some way deficient. They are instructed to be sensitive in the interpretation of what has been written, and to give the benefit of the doubt to the learner. No marks are given for spelling, grammar, expression or any other non-subject criterion. In fact, most learners have no trouble making themselves understood.

For a small minority, however, weaknesses in their English prevent them from being able to express their answers as effectively as possible. They may not understand the questions with the necessary precision. The answers they produce may be weakened by their inability to express what it is they have to say, and this may have an impact on their overall performance.

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Can't find the information you're looking for?

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If you have a syllabus or teaching related question which has not been answered here, and you've read the syllabus and supporting resources on **Teacher Support**, have a look at the information on our **Help** pages.

For individual assessment queries or centre-specific enquiries, contact our Customer Services team either by email at info@cie.org.uk, by **web form** or by calling us on +44 1223 553554.