



INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE ORGANIZATION

Diploma Programme

Geography markbands and command terms

**Higher level (HL) and standard level (SL) paper 1
and
Higher level (HL) and standard level (SL) paper 2**

For use from May 2007

Diploma Programme
Geography markbands and command terms

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Geography markbands and command terms

Using the geography markbands

The markbands for Diploma Programme geography examinations are published here for information. The markbands are to be used for both paper 1 (at HL and SL) and paper 2 (at HL and SL). These markbands differ from those published in the geography specimen papers in 2001. They have been revised following examinations.

The markbands should be used for guidance when determining the marks to be allocated to a particular question.

The student's response is not expected to meet all the criteria for a particular markband—the question may be framed in such a way that it does not give the student the opportunity to meet all the criteria, in which case a markband should be chosen where the majority of the criteria are met. The first column (“overall quality”) should be regarded as the determining element.

The bands should be used to allocate marks according to the total marks for each question, which may be 20, 15 or 10 depending on the structure of the question.

Paper 1 and paper 2 markbands

	Overall quality	Factual knowledge/content	Examples/case studies	Skills level *	Analysis/evaluation	20	15	10
A	the question has been completely misinterpreted or omitted	no relevant facts	none	none appropriate	no evidence of analysis	0	0	0
B	poor, ignores important aspects of the question	little knowledge; largely superficial or of marginal relevance	none or irrelevant	very low level; little attempt at organization of material	very little analysis; no evaluation	1–4	1–3	1–2
C	answer partially addresses question	some relevant knowledge and understanding but with significant omissions; poor terminology	relevant, limited in detail	few or no maps or diagrams; little evidence of skills or organization of material	little attempt at analysis; no evaluation or may show some evaluation, compensating for lack of description	5–8	4–6	3–4
D	competent answer although not fully developed, tends to be descriptive	relevant knowledge and understanding but with some omissions; acceptable terminology	included, occasionally generalized	basic maps or diagrams; evidence of some skills; some indication of structure and organization of material	some attempt at analysis; beginning to show evaluation	9–12	7–9	5–6
E	developed answer that covers most aspects of the question	generally accurate knowledge and understanding but with some minor omissions; generally appropriate terminology	well chosen, occasionally generalized	acceptable maps and diagrams; appropriate structure and organization of material	generally appropriate analysis; some attempt at evaluation but may be unbalanced	13–16	10–12	7–8
F	well-developed answer that covers most or all aspects of the question	accurate, specific, well-detailed knowledge and understanding; terminology sound	well chosen and developed	appropriate, sound maps and diagrams; well structured and organized responses	sound, detailed analysis; good and well-balanced attempt at evaluation	17–20	13–15	9–10

*** Notes**

- maps and diagrams may not always be appropriate to questions—the comments refer to those questions where they have been specifically required
- where the structure and organization of the material involves essay writing, the structure does not demand an introductory or concluding paragraph

Glossary of command terms

The command terms are reissued here, including recent revisions, for information. They were previously published in the geography specimen papers (published November 2001).

Students should be familiar with the following key terms and phrases used in paper 1 and paper 2 examination questions, which are to be understood as described below. Although these terms are used frequently in examination questions, other terms may be used to direct students to present an answer in a specific way.

Account for	<p>Asks students to explain a particular happening or outcome. Students are expected to present a reasoned case for the existence of something. For example:</p> <p><i>Account for possible changes in vegetation cover.</i></p>
Analyse	<p>Asks students to respond with a closely argued and detailed examination of a particular topic, pattern or process. If this key term is augmented by “the extent to which” then the student should be clear that judgment is also sought. For example:</p> <p><i>Analyse the data in the table below.</i></p> <p><i>Analyse the pattern of distribution of settlements in low lying landscape.</i></p>
Assess	<p>Asks students to measure and judge the merits and quality of an argument or concept. Students must clearly identify and explain the evidence for the assessment they make. For example:</p> <p><i>Assess the impact of human actions on the natural environment.</i></p>
Classify	<p>Invites students to assemble or arrange data, statistics or other types of material in a logical and coherent manner according to categories, sequences, ranks, order or graphs that are meaningful. For example:</p> <p><i>Classify the countries listed in the table according to their level of development.</i></p>
Compare/compare and contrast	<p>Asks students to describe two situations and present the similarities and differences between them. On its own, a description of the two situations does not meet the requirements of this key word. For example:</p> <p><i>Compare the levels of infant mortality between the two countries shown on the map.</i></p> <p><i>Compare and contrast the morphology of cities in MEDCs and LEDCs.</i></p> <p><i>Contrast the landforms that occur in constructive and destructive plate boundaries.</i></p>

Construct	Asks students to present various information in a diagrammatic or tabular form. For example: <i>Construct a population pyramid to illustrate the information contained in the table.</i>
Define	Asks students to give a clear and precise account of a given word or term. For example: <i>Define crude birth rate.</i>
Describe	Asks students to give a portrayal of a given situation. It is a neutral request to present a detailed picture of a given situation, event, pattern, process or feature. For example: <i>Describe the features of a volcano.</i>
Discuss	Asks students to consider a statement or to offer a considered review or balanced argument of a particular topic. For example: <i>Discuss the view that urban areas have an impact on local climate.</i>
Distinguish	Asks students to make clear an understanding of similar terms. For example: <i>Distinguish between counterurbanization and suburbanization.</i>
Estimate	Invites students to provide an answer that can have a small margin of error and still be acceptable. For example: <i>Estimate the scale on the aerial photograph.</i>
Evaluate	Asks students to make an appraisal of the argument or concept under investigation or discussion. Students should weigh the nature of the evidence available and identify and discuss the convincing aspects of the argument, as well as its limitations and implications. For example: <i>Evaluate the extent to which the following are valid indicators of economic development.</i>
Examine	Asks students to investigate an argument or concept. Students should approach the question in a critical and detailed way that uncovers assumptions and interrelationships of the issue. For example: <i>Examine the relationship between building height and land values.</i>

Explain	<p>Directs students to describe clearly, make intelligible and give reasons for a concept, pattern, process, relationship or idea. For example:</p> <p><i>Explain the global distribution of earthquakes.</i></p>
Identify	<p>Asks students to recognize either one or more component parts or features on a map, diagram, photograph or table, or to recognize one or more component parts in an argument or concept. For example:</p> <p><i>Identify the countries on the map that have a high population density.</i></p> <p><i>Identify and describe the factors affecting infiltration rates.</i></p>
Outline	<p>Asks students to write a brief summary of the major aspects of the issue, principle or argument stated in the question. For example:</p> <p><i>Outline the main reasons for desertification.</i></p>
To what extent?	<p>Asks students to evaluate the success or otherwise of one argument or concept over another. Students should present a conclusion, supported by arguments. For example:</p> <p><i>To what extent do you agree with the above statement?</i></p>

Classification of command terms

This classification provides a hierarchy of the cognitive skills required by the examination papers and generally matches the allocation of marks in examination questions.

The key command terms that are frequently used in examinations, and with which students should be familiar for paper 1 and paper 2, are classified below according to the skills of comprehension, application and evaluation. Please note that the command terms:

- are listed in alphabetical order
- require the student to demonstrate differing levels of skill
- relate to the context of the examination question.

For example, “classify” may require the ability to list (comprehension) or may require the ability to provide a new classification by applying existing knowledge (application).

Class of skill	Key command term	Skill
Comprehension	Classify Define Describe Estimate Identify Outline	Terms involving comprehension require students to demonstrate knowledge and understanding.
Application	Account for Construct Discuss Distinguish Explain	Terms involving application require students to relate or to use and apply knowledge and understanding.
Evaluation	Analyse Assess Compare/compare and contrast Discuss Evaluate Examine To what extent?	Terms involving evaluation require students to make an appraisal of a situation by considering the evidence available (its nature, relevance, validity and reliability) and by considering all sides (opposing viewpoints) of the issue. A good evaluation will include a clear judgment about the relative merits of different evidence and arguments.