Edexcel Geography A-level

Fieldwork Section 5: Writing Your Coursework

Essential Notes

Writing up

To achieve a high mark, the coursework should resemble a **scientific report**. It should be **logically structured**, correctly **referenced** and might contain sources of information other than your own.

Structure

The most effective way to order your report is to write **five sections**:

- **Introduction** - set out your hypothesis/ question, explaining some of the theory behind your chosen subject and the general location of your study
- **Methodology** - Describe each of your primary data collection methods, showing a blank copy of any data collection sheets (annotated with why you are collecting certain data) and discuss any potential problems or strengths with your chosen data collection methods. Also, list any secondary sources that you intend to use.
- **Data Presentation and Analysis** - The largest and most important section of your report. Once you've established how to present your data (graph, table, list) you must describe the pattern shown by each graph or presentation method.
- **Critical Evaluation** - You must evaluate the usefulness ('utility') and truthfulness ('validity') of your data. Always provide a balanced view on your investigation - no investigation will be perfect, nor will everything be invalid.
- **Conclusion** - Discuss the wider findings of your investigation and refer back to your original question.

General Tips for Writing

- Always use **headings and subheadings**, to separate different sections of your investigation and different arguments
- **Don't repeat points** - if you wish to discuss the same thing again, write a reference to the previous section and the page number it was written on (e.g. 'please see Introduction on Page 3')
- **Tables** are excellent, especially for lists of information in which you need to discuss several topics. For example, tables of primary and secondary data allow you to write all the necessary source details and discuss their reliability, validity and ethicality
- Use the **word count** as a reference whilst writing your report, but only reduce your report's words in the final drafts. Whilst writing your coursework initially, the word count can be a distraction and it is more important to complete your report in detail
- You will need to write and rewrite several drafts. **Drafting** is key, especially once you combine the sections and you are adapting the layout of your document
- Pages should be **numbered**, so you can easily refer to sections rather than repeating them. It allows a contents page to be created
- Always **define** what an **acronym** stands for when you first write it within your report, e.g. WTO (World Trade Organisation), HDI (Human Development Index), etc

Harvard Referencing

You may wish to use sources or images from the internet to support your primary data and provide additional viewpoints and information. **To avoid plagiarism**, it is essential to reference correctly.

Within the main body of your report, after discussing the content taken from a source, you should write the author, and then date the information in a bracket:

For a scientific journal or book (Author, Date Published)
For a web article or website (Name of Source, Date of page creation)

At the end of your report, you should **write a bibliography** of all sources of data or information used that aren't your own. It isn't necessary to list all of your secondary sources within the bibliography if you have written their source and details previously in the report. You should write your bibliography as follows:

For a book or journal - Authors, (date published) Title of Item, Location of Publisher, Publishing Firm
For a website or web article - Authors, (date of page creation) Web Address, (Date Accessed)

For any **images** used in your coursework report, reference the source as demonstrated above, **within the figure description**:

Figure 1: PMT Logo (Physics & Maths Tutor, 2018)

High Level Additions:
To achieve the highest marks for your coursework, try to include the following:

- Start your report with a **title page and abstract**, summarising your investigation in no more than 100 words.
- Include a **contents page**, listing all of your headings and subheadings
- Show how you have met the markscheme - separate sections using subheadings to isolate definite marks, rather than having several paragraphs
- Attempt some **mathematical calculations yourself** rather than relying on a secondary source. For instance, finding the area of your sample, or proportion of sample size to actual population
- Include **statistical analysis** (Spearman's Rank, Standard Deviation, T- test, Central Tendency etc) on some of your primary data. Include your workings in the Appendix

Checklist:
You could print this off and check each section against your final draft, to ensure your maximise your marks for the fieldwork:

Section		Done?
Title Pages	Write the main question & abstract (High Level Addition)	
	Contents page, listing all headings and subheadings with the appropriate page numbers	
Introduction	Define key words in main question	
	Describe appropriate theories & their influence over the investigation and/or what results they predict	
	Describe location. Why here?	
	Define sub-questions or hypotheses	
	What results do you predict for your investigation?	
Methodology	For each sub-question or hypothesis, describe what data needs to be collected	
	Sampling techniques for primary data	
	Annotated blank copies of any data collection sheets needed (Tally Charts, Interviews, Copy of Survey Monkey) explaining why it is necessary to ask these questions	
	List of sources of secondary data needed	
Data Presentation & Analysis	Variety of data representation used (graphs, tables, maps)	
	Each graph is analysed - trends described, anomalies identified, significance of results	
	Several analysed graphs and some secondary data per sub-question/ hypothesis	
	Use a statistical technique to further analyse some data (High Level Addition)	
Critical Evaluation	Validity of data used: Were your sources necessary?	
	Timescale of investigation - did your timing affect the results?	

	Frequency of data collection (if repeated collections)	
	Ethicality of data collected: Private information? Sensitivity of questions?	
	Reliability of secondary sources: Do you trust the website or book? Does the data seem realistic?	
	Future Improvements: If you redid this investigation, what would you change to improve your results?	
Conclusion	Discuss the sample size. Is it representative of the general population?	
	Conclude answer to each sub-question/ hypothesis, explaining your reasoning for each	
	Conclude your answer to your main question - explaining your reasoning	
	Do your findings match your initial predictions? Try to explain why or why not	
	Can you propose an adaptation or new theory to explain results? (High Level Addition)	
Bibliography	All sources (excluding secondary sources) are listed and correctly referenced	
Appendix	Any statistical workings - screenshots of spreadsheets, scans of paper notes, photo of calculator (High Level Addition)	
	Any further calculations - calculating areas, proportions, etc (High Level Addition)	
General Features to Include	Pages are numbered	
	Figures are numbered and labelled below the image	
	Tables are numbered and labelled above the table	