

Edexcel A Geography GCSE

Topic 1B: River Landscapes and Processes

Definitions Flashcards

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Abrasion



Abrasion

A form of erosion where loose material, pebbles and sediment 'sandpaper' the walls and floors of a river, cliff or glacier.



Attrition



Attrition

Rocks and pebbles continuously hit against each other, causing them to break into smaller rocks until they become sediment.



Biological Weathering



Biological Weathering

Rocks are broken apart by growing vegetation and roots, microbes, or chemical reactions from animal faeces. This erodes the rock face.



Chemical Weathering



Chemical Weathering

The weak acid in rainwater dissolves chemical compounds in the rock.



Drainage Basin



Drainage Basin

Often called a catchment area, it is an area of land where all water, precipitation and streams flow and drain off into a single river, bay or out to sea.



Dredging



Dredging

Sediment (silt) and other materials are dug up and removed from the bottom of rivers and lakes.



Embankments



Embankments

The banks of a river are raised up by brick and concrete, to increase the channel capacity and prevent flooding.



Estuary



Estuary

The area where a river meets an ocean, often muddy or silty. Sometimes estuaries become exposed at low tide and are hazardous to traverse in a boat due to sandbanks.



Floodplain



Floodplain

The wide, low-lying floor of a river valley. Floodplains are found in the lower course of a river and tend to act as overspill when the river channel is full.



Floodplain Zoning



Floodplain Zoning

Controlling where houses and buildings are built relative to the river to reduce their risk of flooding.



Freeze Thaw



Freeze Thaw

A form of physical sub-aerial weathering where water freezes in the cracks of a rock, expands and enlarges the crack. This weakens the rock overtime leaving it more open to erosion.



Geology



Geology

The physical structure and arrangement of a rock.



Hard Management



Hard Management

The use of concrete structures to reduce or halt the recession of a coastline.

Includes: Groynes, Sea Walls, Rock Armour.



Highlands



Highlands

An area of land that is at a high elevation and tends to have a larger relief.



Hydraulic Action



Hydraulic Action

The pressure of compressed air forced into the cracks of a rock face causes the rock to weaken and break apart.



Igneous Rock



Igneous Rock

Rock that has formed from volcanic activity, often cooled magma on the Earth's surface.



Impermeable



Impermeable

A rock that does not allow water to pass through it.



Levee



Levee

A natural or artificial build up of earth on the banks of a river to prevent water from overspilling and controlling the river flow.



Lowlands



Lowlands

An area of land that has a small relief, so tends to be flat and at a low elevation.



Mass Movement



Mass Movement

A large, downhill movement of material usually from a cliff-face. Here, the rock is often weak due to erosion and the movement is caused by gravity.



Mechanical Weathering



Mechanical Weathering

Sometimes called physical weathering, this is the breakdown of rocks due to forces (such as freeze-thaw) and not chemical reactions.



Metamorphic Rock



Metamorphic Rock

Rock formed under intense pressure and heat, often close to tectonic plate boundaries.



Permeable



Permeable

A rock that allows water to pass through it.



Relief



Relief

The difference in the height of land for a particular region. A large relief means a region has a large difference between the lowest and highest points.



Saltation



Saltation

A form of sediment transportation where smaller rocks/pebbles are pushed along the seabed by currents, because they are too heavy to be carried in the flow of the water.



Sedimentary Rock



Sedimentary Rock

Formed from the broken remains of sediment and other rocks that have compressed and cemented together over thousands of years.



Solution



Solution

Slightly acidic water dissolves chemicals from a rock face (usually limestone) and transports these dissolved materials and chemical compounds.



Storm Hydrograph



Storm Hydrograph

A graph that shows the variation of river discharge over a short period of time (days).



Suspension



Suspension

Small rocks that are light enough to float are carried in the water, rather than along the bed.



Thalweg



Thalweg

The path of fastest water flow in a river.



Traction



Traction

Large rocks and boulders are rolled along the bed of the river or sea.

