

WJEC/Eduqas Geography A-Level

Independent Investigation Non-Exam Assessment

How to Write your Independent
Investigation
Notes



Writing a Report

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

Here is a suggestion for the **order** in which you could complete your investigation:

1. Choose a topic
2. Preliminary research into the topic
3. Choose a relevant title and define how it links to the specification
4. Aims and hypotheses
5. Rationale for hypotheses
6. Brief plan of methodology
7. Risk assessment and methodology
8. Data collection
9. Data presentation
10. Interpretation and analysis
11. Write up and collate findings
12. Conclusion
13. Introduction
14. Evaluation
15. Appendices and bibliography
16. Abstract
17. Proofread
18. Contents page
19. Presentation/Formatting

The report must:

- be **3000 to 4000 words**, including all text apart from the appendices and abstract.
- be word processed in **Arial, Calibri** or **Times New Roman**
- be font size **11** point
- have text set out in **1.5** spacing
- have all pages **numbered**
- have **candidate** number and **centre** number in either the header or footer on all pages
- have **headings** and **labels** for such items as photographs, tables and maps, with scales and keys / legends on maps.

General Tips for Writing

- **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
- Create a contents page using the numbered pages
- 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



- Your report should be written in third person, so that it is not from your perspective and sounds more academic. This is a surprisingly tricky task when talking about what I have done/I will do etc.

Instead of writing

- **'I chose** these 2 deprived wards because of their contrasting housing stock'.

You have to write

- 'These two deprived wards **were chosen** because of their contrasting housing stock'.

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

Reliability and Accuracy

Reliability is often confused with accuracy, but they are both very different. Reliability is how close your results are to each other and accuracy is how close your results are to the actual value.



Not Reliable but Accurate



Accurate and Reliable



Not Accurate or Reliable



Accurate but not Reliable

Checklist:

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



Section		Do ne?
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	

Useful Links

[This guide](#) produced by the Royal Geographical Society is highly useful for guidance on every step in the NEA process.

