

Why study A Level Geography?

There has never been a better or more important time to study A level Geography. Dealing with vital issues such as climate change, **migration**, **environmental degradation**, **social issues** and **natural hazards**, A level Geography is one of the most relevant subjects you could choose to study.



- Communication and Teamwork Skills
- Research and analytical skills in IT
- Fieldwork
- Mixture of technical and social skills

What words can be associated with Geography?

<https://youtu.be/iATfXV4lu4M>

What careers can you do with Geography?

According to the Royal Geographical Society, Geography graduates have some of the highest rates of graduate employment.

Environmental Lawyer

Conservationist

Surveying

Environmental Planning

Journalist

Meteorologist

Town and Transport Planning

Sustainable Analyst - Banking

Sustainable Consultancy

Landscape Architect

Law and Business

Research Organisations

Army

Police

How am I assessed and graded?

A Level Geography **Edexcel 9GEO**

Paper 1: Physical

30% of the qualification
105 marks

Paper 2: Human

30% of the qualification
105 marks

Paper 3: Synoptic

20% of the qualification
70 marks

Paper 4: NEA

20% of the qualification
70 marks



Paper 1: Physical Geography Exam

2hrs 30 minutes
3 Sections
120 marks

Water and Carbon Cycle

4 mark Q x 1
6 mark Q x 2
20 mark Q x1
(Total 36)

Coastal systems

4 mark Q x 1
6 mark Q x 2
20 mark Q x1
(Total 36)

Hazards

Multiple choice 1 mark x 4
6 mark Q X 1
9 Mark Q x2
20 mark x1
Total 48

Paper 2: Human Geography exam

2hrs 30 minutes
3 Sections
120 marks

Global systems and governance

4 mark Q x 1
6 mark Q x 2
20 mark Q x1
(Total 36)

Changing Places

4 mark Q x 1
6 mark Q x 2
20 mark Q x1
(Total 36)

Contemporary urban environments

Multiple choice 1 mark x 4
6 mark Q X 1
9 Mark Q x2
20 mark x1
Total 48

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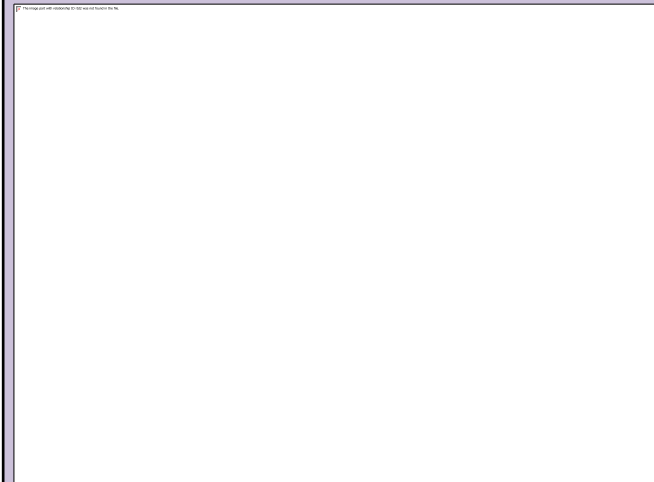
Paper 4: NEA

20% of the qualification
70 marks



Paper 3: Synoptic Paper

2hrs 15 minutes
Based on Synoptic Themes
70 marks



Paper 4: NEA

3000 – 4000 words
4 days compulsory fieldwork + your own
fieldwork
70 marks

- Internally assessed and externally moderated
- Student defines their own question relating to the topic
- Student incorporates data collection as per their question
- Student creates and develops a report that focuses on the investigation analysis, evaluation of data, presentation of data findings and extended writing
- Students must show an evidence of a range of appropriate methodology (quantitative, qualitative, sampling methods) that is appropriate to the chosen location/study area

Monday, 29 June 2026

What is the power of superpowers?

Learning Objectives: To be able to understand how different types of powerful countries can be defined and characterised using a range of criteria

Do Now! What do you know about Geography?

| Question | Answer 1 | Answer 2 | Answer 3 | Answer 4 |
|--|--------------------------------|--|--|--|
| 1. Which sector of industry dominates emerging economies? | Primary | Secondary | Tertiary | Quaternary |
| 2. Which of the following is an indication of an economically advanced economy, rather than an emerging economy? | Low life expectancy | High male/female inequalities | Literacy rates close to 100% | Poor access to technology |
| 3. How is the economic core of a nation defined? | The core revenues and services | The area with the most people in a country | The area with the highest standard of living, and generating the most wealth | The urban areas that have the greatest links and technology infrastructure |

The receiving country is forced to buy goods and services from the donor country

Geochallenge: Many emerging economies rely on aid from other nations and charities. Sometimes this aid is tied to trade agreements. What is an advantage of tied aid to the donor country?

Key Term + Definition

Superpower: A nation with the ability to project its influence anywhere in the world and be a dominant global force

Hyperpower: An unchallenged superpower that is dominant in all aspects of power (political, cultural etc.)

Blue Water Navy: One which can deploy into the open ocean. Smaller nations have green water navy that can only patrol littoral waters

Diplomacy: The negotiation and decision making that takes place between nations and international relations

Geo-strategic policies: Policies that attempt to meet the global and regional policy aims of a country by combining diplomacy and the movement on military assets

Key Concept

Hard vs Soft Power

Where are we on our learning journey?

| | |
|-------------|---|
| Superpowers | |
| 7.1 | The power of superpowers |
| 7.2 | Changing patterns and polarity |
| 7.3 | Emerging powers |
| 8.1 | The global economic system |
| 8.2 | International decision-making |
| 8.3 | Global environmental concerns |
| 9.1 | Contested geography |
| 9.2 | Developing countries: opportunities and threats |
| 9.3 | Uncertainty for existing superpowers |

What is hyperpower?

Learning Objectives: To be able to understand how different types of powerful countries can be defined and characterised using a range of criteria

A useful definition of a superpower is a nation that can 'conduct a global strategy including the possibility of destroying the world; to command vast economic potential and influence; and to present a universal **ideology** (Professor Paul Dukes)

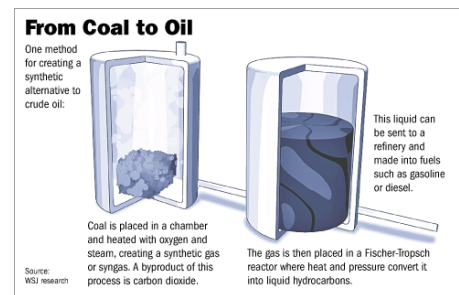
- In some cases a superpower is referred to as a **Hyperpower**
- Emerging superpowers are those nations whose economic, military and political influence is already large and growing
- Regional power are smaller – they influence other countries at a continental scale



South Africa in Africa

Despite the severe recession in 1991, South Africa's economy has remained buoyant in comparison to its neighbouring states (with the exception of Botswana). In 1989, South Africa's accounted for more than 80% of the GDP of the countries of the 10 countries in the southern region.

It does not have the oil reserves but it has the technology to convert coal into oil



What are the pillars of superpowers status?

Learning Objectives: To be able to understand how different types of powerful countries can be defined and characterised using a range of criteria

Task 1: Stick in the Pillars of Power in your book and annotate around the diagram, explaining how each factor contributes to superpower status



Political Power: The ability to influence others through **diplomacy** to 'get your way' is important and is exercised through international organisations such as the UN and World Trade Organisation

Cultural Power: Includes how appealing a nation's way of life, values and **ideology** are to others, and is often exercised through film, the arts and food

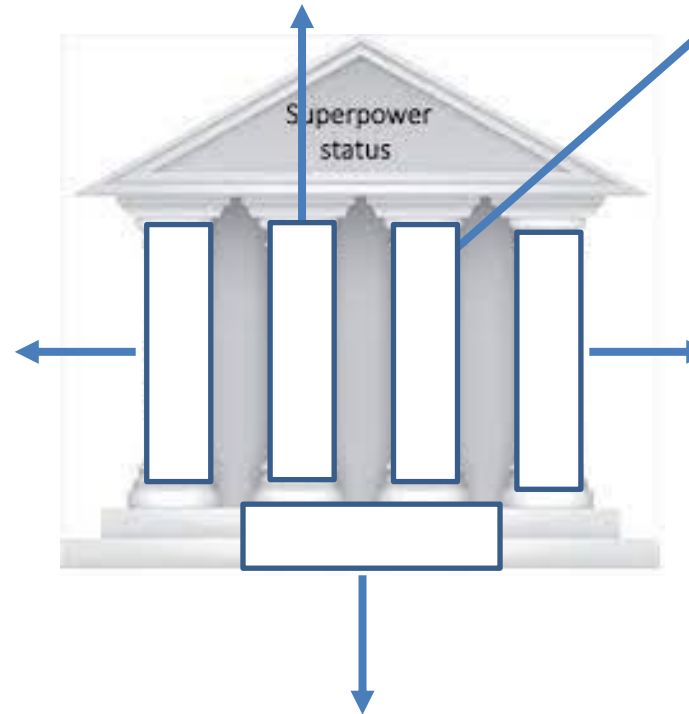


Geochallenge: Explain how blue water navy can contribute to superpower status

Military Power: This is used in two ways

1. The threat of military action is bargaining chip
2. Military force can be used to achieve geopolitical goals

Some forms of military power such as **blue water navy**, drone and missiles can be deployed globally and reach distant places



Resources: Can be in the form of physical resources (fossil fuels, minerals, land) but also human resources. The latter includes the level of education and skills in a nation, but also the sheer numbers of people ('demographic weight').



Economic Power: This represents the 'base' of the temple and is a **prerequisite** of power. A large and powerful economy gives nations the wealth to build and maintain a powerful military, exploit natural resources and develop communities through education



What is hard and soft power?

Learning Objectives: To be able to understand how different types of powerful countries can be defined and characterised using a range of criteria

Key concept: Hard versus soft power

The political scientist Joseph Nye coined the term 'soft power' in 1990. Soft power is the power of persuasion. Some countries are able to make others follow their lead by making policies attractive and appealing. This contrasts with 'hard power', which means getting your own way by force. Both forms of power have existed for centuries. Economic power can be thought of as sitting somewhere between hard and soft power (Figure 7.3). A third type of power, sharp power, refers to the power of manipulation such as attempts to interfere in other countries democratic elections or manipulate views on social media. This type of power is increasingly important. China and Russia are widely believed to use it.

Nye has argued that the most powerful countries utilise 'smart power': a combination of hard and soft mechanisms to get their own way. The use of different types of power is necessary because:

- Invasions, war and conflict are very blunt instruments. They often do not go as planned and fail to achieve the aims of those exercising hard power.

- Soft power alone may not persuade one nation to do as another says, especially if they are culturally and ideologically very different.

Today, perhaps true smart power comes from combining hard, soft and sharp power mechanisms (Figure 7.4).

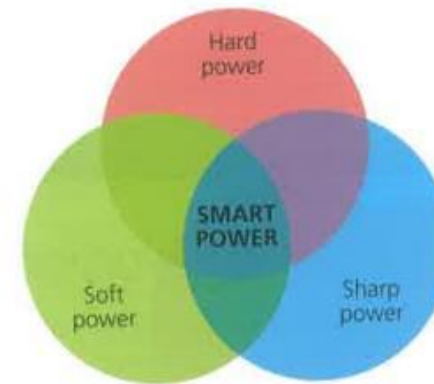


Figure 7.4 Types of power

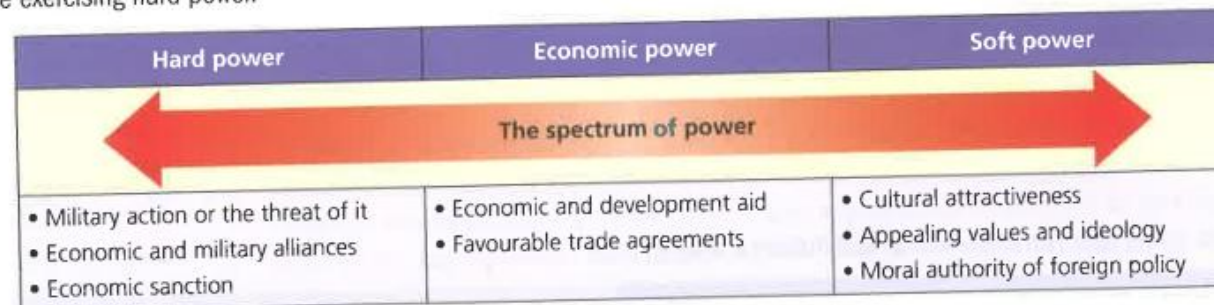


Figure 7.3 The power spectrum

What is hard and soft power?

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Very broadly, it is the case that hard power has become less important than soft power over time. During the colonial and imperial era, from 1600 to 1950, powerful countries conquered and controlled territory by military force. Armed forces were often positioned across the world in a way akin to a global game of chess. This approach was influenced by early **geo-strategic** thinking.



In 1904 Halford Mackinder, a British Geographer, identified a region of Eurasia he named the 'Heartland' (Russia to China and from the Himalayas to the Arctic). He argued it was a **geo-strategic** location because it included a large proportion of the world's physical and human resources.

Later, Halford Mackinder's theories were influential and used in:

1. WW1 to limit the ability of Germans to expand the land area it controlled
2. Post-WW2 NATO allies attempts to contain Soviet Union expanding into western and southern Europe
3. The American 'Trump Doctrine' to contain the spread from the Soviet Union to China