

Detailed guidance sheet – Geography Summer Task 2026

This summer task gives you the opportunity to get stuck into the practical fieldwork side of the course from the start. We pride ourselves on giving you fieldwork opportunities throughout Year 12 in preparation for your Fieldwork Dissertation. The Fieldwork Dissertation is worth 20% of your final grade. The more we practice now, the better your final dissertation. You cannot go big enough on this so don't shy away with this task.

Step 1: Deciding on your location and the criteria you're going to investigate

Everyone's local place is different and unique. When we say 'local' we are referring to a small-scale area - it could be an entire village in rural Norfolk; but if you wish to investigate a larger area then you will need to narrow your study down to a specific ward in your town or city. Go to: <https://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/election-maps/gb/> and on the left-hand side, scroll to box 'District Wards' and check that. A local place doesn't have to be where you live – it could be further away but should be in the UK. **However, you should visit it in person to collect your primary data.**

☑ You are aiming to answer with your fieldwork, “**Which characteristics are the most significant in influencing the place identity of _____?**” (insert the place name in the space).

☑ When we discuss place identity, we are referring to the objective features in an area that combine to create a meaningful place. We usually explore place identity using the six categories of the place profile, which are detailed below:

- **Built environment:** How old are the buildings? What style of housing dominates? Are there any major built structures? How dense are the buildings? What infrastructure (roads, railways, etc.) exists?
- **Natural environment:** What green spaces are there? Are there any protected natural environments? What is the geology and relief like? Are there any waterways?
- **Demographics:** How many people live there? What is the age structure? What is the ethnic make-up of the population?
- **Socio-economic:** What is the unemployment rate? Average income? Education levels? Average cost of housing?
- **Cultural:** Are there any facilities for specific groups (e.g. religious, international groups, etc.). Sporting clubs? Local traditions or events?
- **Political:** Which political party is in power here? Does it differ from the national political party? Are there local groups such as resident associations or heritage groups?

For your academic poster you will need to research **three** of these categories for your local area. You are not expected to write about all six categories.

Step 2: Collecting and researching data on 3 categories

☑ Have a look at some of the ideas here on how you can collect data. You don't have to do all of these but this should give you a starting point if you're not sure what you could do. There are also a list of websites you can explore for further ideas too at the end of this section. You can come up with your own, innovative ways of collecting data if you want to push yourself.

☑ Complete the research sheet (found at the end of this detailed guidance sheet) for your local place. Allow yourself 3-4 hours on this section.

1. Built Environment

Data collection ideas – you can come up with your own of course:

- **Field sketching and annotated photos:** Take photos of different buildings and label them with observations about their age, style, use, and condition.
- **Building density survey:** Count the number of buildings on a set route or within a 100m² area and note the variety (e.g. residential, commercial).
- **Mapping:** Use free tools like Google My Maps to map key features: infrastructure (roads, railways, public buildings), housing styles, and landmarks.
- **Compare old and new maps** (via Digimap for Schools or local archives) to assess how the built environment has changed. **Use historic maps** from [National Library of Scotland](#)

2. Natural Environment

Data collection ideas – you can come up with your own of course:

- **Land use classification:** Walk around your area and classify areas into green space, residential, commercial, etc.
- **Biodiversity tally:** Record types of wildlife, tree species, and water features in local parks or green spaces.
- **Photos and field notes:** Take photos of natural features and make notes about terrain, elevation, or visible water bodies.
- **Use OS Maps:** Mark the location of natural features like rivers, hills, or nature reserves.

- **Use Google Earth/Street View** to identify and map green spaces or natural features. Compare old and new maps.

3. Demographics

Data collection ideas – you can come up with your own of course:

- **Use ONS Data:** Search for your postcode or local area on the [Office for National Statistics](#) site to get info on:
 - Population size
 - Age structure
 - Ethnic diversity
- **Create your own survey:** Design a simple questionnaire asking local residents about their age, background, or how long they've lived in the area (ensure privacy and ethical considerations). You could make use of QR codes to create an online survey for people to access.

4. Socio-economic

Data collection ideas – you can come up with your own of course:

- **ONS and Local Authority websites:** Find data on income, education levels, housing prices, and employment.
- **Local observations:** Record the types of shops and services available (luxury vs. discount), housing condition, and car ownership as visible indicators.
- **Create a service map:** Mark amenities like schools, job centres, healthcare, etc. on a map to understand accessibility.

5. Cultural

Data collection ideas – you can come up with your own of course:

- **Local event calendars** (on council or community websites): Note down any recurring events or festivals.
- **Local news articles:** These can help identify local issues.
- **Photo survey:** Capture cultural markers like murals, religious buildings, community centres, and language on shop signs.

- **Interviews or informal chats:** Ask people about local clubs, places of worship, or cultural events they value. Use family and friends of different ages to help.

6. Political

How to collect data:

- **Council websites or TheyWorkForYou.com:** Identify the local councillors, their political parties, and local issues being debated.
- **Look for community boards or newsletters:** Often posted outside libraries, shops or community centres.
- **Identify local activist or heritage groups:** Search online for residents' associations or campaigns (e.g. anti-development groups).

Other useful information

Census data: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/customprofiles/draw/>

- To use this website – search for your Ward in the search box.
- Once selected, click the green “Build profile” button
- Select topics on the left hand side (click “Show more” to see all available)
- It will show data from the 2021 Census for your ward.

Use imagery from Google Street View (which you can also go back in time on) to explore your local area. Guide here: <https://blog.google/products/maps/go-back-in-time-with-street-view/>

Lots of other creative fieldwork data collection ideas from: [Method for Placemaking – Field Studies Council](#)

Step 3: Creating an Academic Poster on your findings

You should now use this information to create an A3 size (or larger!) academic poster. Academic posters contain subheadings with paragraphs of writing alongside graphics such as maps, charts, and photos. You could do this by hand or computer.

The writing on your academic poster should include:

1. An introduction to the local area studied – don't forget to name it!
2. A section on objective feature 1 (eg built environment)
3. A section on objective feature 2 (eg demographics) ← Explain what you found and evaluate what this shows
4. A section on objective feature 3 (eg cultural)
5. A conclusion answering the question: **Which characteristics are the most significant in influencing the place identity of _____?**

What should you include on your academic poster:

- Posters should have a clear and short title readable from 1.5 metres away
- Use a good size font, don't use block capitals and avoid elaborate fonts and dark backgrounds
- Keep a simple colour palette
- Use a standard sans-serif font such as Arial or Trebuchet
- Include the list of references used (this can be in a smaller font)
- Ensure you have included **references/bibliography, a word count**, maps, graphs, annotated photos.

Your academic Poster alongside your reflections will be marked using the criteria on the next page. This will determine your suitability for our challenging but rewarding course. You will receive an overall Attitude to Learning Grade:

ATL Grade	Descriptor	Meaning
1	Excellent	Fully meets and often exceeds the expectations; insightful and well-developed
2	Good	Meets expectations with sound understanding and structure.
3	Limited	Some relevant content, but lacks depth, clarity, or consistency. Partial understanding. Would struggle to grade well in this subject.
4	Unsuitable	Does not meet expectations/poor approach; significant misunderstandings or missing content. Does not show suitability for the course.

☑ Assessment criteria: this is how your work will be judged.

Criteria	Excellent (1)	Good (2)	Limited (3)	Unsuitable (4)
<p>Knowledge and understanding (AO1) Your use of geographic terminology as well as factual information to support your points.</p>				
<p>Apply, analyse, and evaluate (AO2) Your ability to add your own considerations of the importance of the factors, and to arrive at a reasoned and justified conclusion.</p>				
<p>Fieldwork skills (AO3) Evidence of your fieldwork and the skills you used to present your data.</p>				
<p>Quality of Written Communication (QWC) Spelling, punctuation, grammar, overall written structure and coherence of your work. Clear formatting. Suitable tone.</p>				
<p>Reflection How you approached the task and overcame issues. Your answers should show curiosity, honesty, and a willingness to think about what you found challenging or rewarding. Next page.</p>				

Step 4: Reflecting on your work

- Please complete this form to reflect on the work you have completed. It forms part of how we mark your work too. Please print this off as part of handing in work.

What did this fieldwork task teach you about how geographers investigate and make sense of the world around them?

How did collecting and analysing your own data feel different from simply learning facts or reading about a place?

What challenges did you face during this task, and how did you approach solving them?

In what ways did this project change or deepen your understanding of place and what makes somewhere meaningful?

What skills do you think you began to develop that will help you as you move into A Level Geography?