

Writing your own Year 12 Essay and Short Answer Question

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Introduction

Here is a suggested way for students and teachers to write their own HSC essay and Short Answer questions. The process will be valuable in relation to preparing essay and short answer questions with the new Stage 6 Geography Syllabus implementation from 2024. Especially since we will not have twenty-three years of past papers to draw upon. This process is based on the current 1999 Stage 6 Geography Syllabus. Figure One is a template you can use after you have reviewed the process outline below.

The Procedure

Resources:

- Syllabus Document
- NESAs Glossary of terms

Process:

- Select one or two Syllabus Points.
- Selects a NESAs term (describe, explain, evaluate).
- Combine the syllabus statement and the NESAs term into a question.
- The examples below do not make use of questions which may ask you to refer to stimulus material

Essay Examples

Essay:

Syllabus Points – People and Economic Activity

Pick a syllabus point:

- **Factors** explaining the nature, spatial patterns and future directions of the selected economic activity such as
 - biophysical: climate, soils, topography, site.
 - ecological: sustainability and resource use.
 - economic: competitive advantage, consumer demand, mobility of labour and capital.
 - sociocultural: tradition, changing lifestyles, labour participation rates.
 - organisational: ownership, decision making and control.
 - technological: transportation, information transmission and flows, biotechnology.
 - political: quotas, tariffs, compacts, agreements.

Pick a NESAs Term

- **Explain –**
Relate cause and effect; make the relationships between things evident; provide why and/or how.

Combine the syllabus statement and the NESAs term into a question.

ESSAY QUESTION:

Explain how factors contribute to the nature, spatial patterns and future directions of a selected economic activity.

Essay: Syllabus Points – Urban Places

Pick a syllabus point:

- the challenges of living in mega cities such as housing, traffic infrastructure, water and power supplies, sanitation services, employment, and other social and health issues.
- the responses to these challenges such as self-help projects, community self-government, cooperation from NGOs, urban protest and the operations of informal economies.

Pick a NESAs Term

- **Evaluate –**
Make a judgement based on criteria; determine the value of

Combine the syllabus statement and the NESAs term into a question.

ESSAY QUESTION:

Evaluate the responses to challenges of living in mega cities.

Essay: Syllabus Points – Ecosystems at Risk

Pick a syllabus point:

TWO case studies of different ecosystems at risk to illustrate their unique characteristics including:

- spatial patterns and dimensions: location, altitude, latitude, size, shape and continuity
 - biophysical interactions including:
 - the dynamics of weather and climate
 - geomorphic and hydrologic processes such as earth movements, weathering, erosion, transport and deposition, soil formation
 - biogeographical processes: invasion, succession, modification, resilience
 - adjustments in response to natural stress
 - the nature and rate of change which affects ecosystem functioning
 - human impacts (both positive and negative)
 - traditional and contemporary management practices.

Pick a NESA Term

- **Compare**
Show how things are similar or different.
- **Contrast**
Show how things are different or opposite.

Combine the syllabus statement and the NESA term into a question.

ESSAY QUESTION:

Compare and contrast the nature and rate of change which affects ecosystem functioning.

Short Answer Examples

Now apply the same process to short and answers and collect stimulus material as required.

Short Answer:

Syllabus Points – People and Economic Activity:

- the environmental, social and economic impacts of the economic activity such as pollution, resource depletion, labour exploitation, cultural integration, provision of infrastructure, job creation, transfer pricing.

Pick a NESA Term

- **Describe**
Provide characteristics and features.

Combine the syllabus statement and the NESA term into a question.

- **Describe** ONE of the environmental, social and economic impacts of the economic activity you have studied.

Short Answer

Syllabus Points – Ecosystems at Risk

- vulnerability and resilience of ecosystems.
 - impacts due to natural stress.
 - impacts due to human induced modifications to energy flows, nutrient cycling, and relationships between biophysical components.

Pick a NESA Term

- **Explain**
Relate cause and effect; make the relationships between things evident; provide why and/or how.

Combine the syllabus statement and the NESA term into a question.

- **Explain** ONE example of vulnerability and resilience of ecosystems.

Short Answer

Syllabus Points – Urban Places

- the challenges of living in mega cities such as housing, traffic infrastructure, water and power supplies, sanitation services, employment, and other social and health issues.

Pick a NESA Term

- **Discuss**
Identify issues and provide points for and/or against.

Combine the syllabus statement and the NESA term into a question.

SHORT ANSWER QUESTION:

Discuss TWO the challenges of living in mega cities.

Conclusion

With the advent of a new Syllabus in 2024 for Stage 6 Geography there will be some unanswered questions. There is not the depth of past examination questions from which to draw to enable our students to practice their HSC technique. This procedure could be of use in 2024 as we develop assessment tasks for the teaching of the 2024 Syllabus in the Preliminary Course. This will be good practice for us as teachers as we get ready for 2025.

Figure 1: Template to Generate Questions

WRITING MY OWN SHORT ANSWER OR EXTENDED WRITTEN RESPONSE QUESTION
Select a Syllabus Point(s) to Assess https://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/wcm/connect/44b0bedc-7902-41eb-8cb8-7f15829488ee/geography-stage-6-syllabus.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CVID=
Select a NESA Directive Term https://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/11-12/hsc/hsc-student-guide/glossary-keywords
Combine the Syllabus Point (s)and the NESA Directive Term Term into a question
Where required select and provided stimulus material to be examined to answer the question designed.