

A LEVEL GEOGRAPHY

Developing a title for your independent investigation



It is a challenge trying to decide what you would like to investigate, let alone what your title could be!

To help shape your thinking and narrow down a potential focus for investigation.....



Which parts of geography are you interested in?

What other subjects or activities outside school/college interest you? Could these be linked to an investigation?

Where would you like to do your fieldwork?

What are the geographical issues happening in the area? How can you find out?

How does all this 'thinking' link back to the specification?



Your independent investigation is an opportunity to develop your expertise on a 'real' geographical issue.

Start your reading and thinking = IDEAS

You are trying to find geographical and spatial hooks = what you want to investigate where and why?



Sources	Key questions
Digital news & social media	What is happening in your local area?
Online journals	Has anything been written before about your potential investigation?
Books – (library ecopies)	Are there any key ideas or models which you could explore?

See literature review infographic for source details.

To start shaping your title, you need:

- A spatial context - where is your investigation going to take place?
- A genuine geographical issue – your investigation will go in search of an answer.
- To find an idea that is measurable i.e. you can collect data and information to help answer your question.

Example title: Does perception and use of Shrewsbury high street vary according to gender?

Reflections: Clear spatial context (Shrewsbury) and at an appropriate scale to be 'measurable' (High Street). How will you measure perception and use of the high street? Who will you ask? What will your sample size be? When will you collect the data?



Questioning helps keep your investigation 'manageable' in terms of the scale and amount of data you collect.

Student A: Studying biology and geography, interested in a career in conservation. Thinking about investigating carbon in a forest area.



Student B: Loves music and is interested in human geography. Thinking about investigating how music influences people's activities or behaviour in their local town.

You now have the seed of an idea....

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Top ingredients: NEA titles

<i>Ingredient</i>	<i>Details</i>	<i>Do you have it?</i>
Geography	Does your study have a clear geographical focus? Geography is about locations and considerations of spatial or temporal patterns, trends and/or changes – the NEA must be about a place and take place in a place!	
Specification	Does your study have a clear link to part of the specification you are studying? Make sure that you are able to show this. The link to the specification will help you define your question. Remember that not all topics you are interested in will be on the specification.	
Core concept, geographical idea or theory	Geography specifications list core concepts – for example interdependence, inequality and resilience. Each topic area has its own concepts e.g. sediment cell and its own theories e.g. Poverty cycle. Your study should be rooted in one or more of these.	
Aim	Your aim is a general statement about the topic you are investigating. The aim should give hints as to what your sub questions will be. An example would be 'An investigation into the factors affecting the distribution and frequency of use of fast food outlets in Abbey Ward Cambridge.'	
Sub questions	NEAs have a range of formats. Some will have a few (2-4) sub questions. Sub questions can enable you to plan how you are going to investigate your aim. Sub questions are often explored using different types of methods. For example a sub question on perception of health services might rely on a questionnaire (primary data) and a published survey by Public Health England (secondary data).	
Scale	NEA studies are most often at a small scale. It may be that a local area that is repeatedly accessible would be advantageous. Small scale studies are more manageable and accurate than large scale studies. However, the area should not be too small otherwise there may not be any significant variation in the variables collected.	
Primary data	Can you collect some primary data? Although it would be possible to complete an NEA using only published primary and secondary data sources this is not typical. The specification requires fieldwork to be undertaken. In both human and physical environments a range of methods used well are best.	
Higher level thinking	Use question types which incorporate higher order thinking skills e.g. 'how far does' or 'to what extent'. Try to avoid 'what' questions – these lead to descriptive or narrative responses.	