

Junior Cycle Geography

Guidelines for the Classroom-Based Assessment and
Assessment Task

First Edition

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Introduction

This document, *Junior Cycle Geography: Guidelines for the Classroom-Based Assessment and Assessment Task*, provides

- general information on Classroom-Based Assessments
- detail of the nature and scope of the Classroom-Based Assessment described in the specification for Junior Cycle Geography.
- the Features of Quality used to describe the level of achievement for each Classroom-Based Assessment
- guidelines for schools, teachers and students on completing the Classroom-Based Assessments
- details of the Assessment Task in Geography and how the school supports its completion.

These guidelines should be used in conjunction with the curriculum specification for Junior Cycle Geography and the *Assessment and Reporting Guidelines* for junior cycle, which includes further details of the subject learning and assessment review process and other aspects of junior cycle assessment set out in these guidelines.

All documentation can be accessed at <http://www.curriculumonline.ie/Junior-cycle/Junior-CycleSubjects/Geography>. An outline of assessment in Junior Cycle can be found in the *Framework for Junior Cycle 2015*, which can be accessed at <https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Policy-Reports/Framework-for-Junior-Cycle-2015.pdf>.

Classroom-Based Assessments: General Information

Classroom-Based Assessments (CBA) are best described as the occasions when the teacher assesses the students using the specific task(s) set out in the subject specification. They are included within the time allocated for Geography, which is a minimum of 200 hours. The Classroom-Based Assessments and the Features of Quality, which support teacher judgement, are set out in these guidelines.

Although the assessment is similar to the ongoing assessment that occurs every day in class, in the case of Classroom-Based Assessments, the teacher's judgement is recorded for Subject Learning and

Assessment Review (SLAR) meetings and is used in the school's reporting to parents and students. Students prepare for the Classroom-Based Assessments over specified periods of time in second and third year. The results of other projects, homework or tests undertaken by the students in the course of their normal classwork do not add up to the award of a descriptor for the Classroom-Based Assessment.

The autonomy of the school in preparing students for the Classroom-Based Assessments

These guidelines set out a range of options for the Classroom-Based Assessments so that they can suit the particular needs and circumstances of students and the school. Students and teachers have a choice of topics and formats for the Classroom-Based Assessments (CBA's) in Geography. A variety of possibilities are presented as to how the CBA's can be conducted and presented for assessment to allow students to pursue their own interests and motivations. For both Classroom-Based Assessments, students are encouraged to use a variety of support materials and to present their work in a variety of formats. Within the parameters set by these guidelines, the range of themes and topics for the assessments can be determined independently by the school, teachers and students.

How the school supports the completion of the Classroom-Based Assessments

The school supports the completion of the assessments by

- ensuring that the *Junior Cycle Geography Specification* and *Junior Cycle Geography: Guidelines for the Classroom-Based Assessments and Assessment Task* are provided to teachers
- supporting teachers in recording the level descriptors awarded to each student
- retaining records and pieces of work, as appropriate, for the purposes of Subject Learning and Assessment Review (SLAR) meetings
- applying the guidelines for Subject Learning and Assessment Review meetings
- supporting teachers and students in the completion of the Assessment Task
- following arrangements for transfer of the completed Assessment Tasks to the State Examinations Commission for marking
- applying inclusive assessment practices and ensuring accessibility of assessment for all students
- reporting the outcomes of Classroom-Based Assessments to students and their parents/guardians as part of the school's reporting procedures and through the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA).

To facilitate providing feedback to students during their engagement with assessment, the process of completing the Classroom-Based Assessments should be viewed as part of teaching and learning, and not solely for assessment purposes. It is envisaged that teachers will guide, support and supervise throughout the process.

Support may include:

- clarifying the requirements of the task
- using annotated examples of student work to clarify the meaning and interpretation of the Features of Quality to students
- providing instructions at strategic intervals to facilitate the timely completion of the assessments
- providing supports for students with special educational needs (SEN).

Note that only work which is the student’s own can be accepted for assessment in the JCPA.

Inclusive assessment practices

Schools facilitate inclusive assessment practices whether as part of ongoing assessment or Classroom-Based Assessments. Where a school judges that a student has a specific physical or learning difficulty, reasonable supports may be put in place to remove, as far as possible, the impact of the disability on the student’s performance in Classroom-Based Assessments. These supports e.g. the support provided by a special needs assistant or the support of assistive technologies, should be in line with the arrangements the school has put in place to support the student’s learning throughout the year.

Classroom-Based Assessments in Geography

There are two Classroom-Based Assessments in Geography. They are assessed at a common level. They relate to the learning outcomes and are scheduled to be undertaken by students in a defined time period within class contact time to a national timetable (as advised by the NCCA) in the school calendar. Following the second of these assessments, students will complete an Assessment Task which is marked by the State Examinations Commission (SEC) as part of the state-certified examination in Geography. The Classroom-Based Assessments for Geography are outlined in Table 1 below.

Classroom-Based Assessments	Format	Student preparation	Completed
Geography in the news Structured inquiry through a response to a recent geographical event (s)	<i>Response to a media source</i> Response may be presented in a wide range of formats Individual or group	At the end of a three-week period students will report on their inquiry, based on a recent media source, relating to a geographical event	Second term of Year 2
My geography Structured inquiry into a geographical aspect (s) in a local area	<i>Geographical investigation</i> Response may be presented in a wide range of formats Individual or group	Students will, over a three-week period, investigate geographical aspects in a local area	First term of Year 3

Table 1: Classroom-Based Assessments for Geography

Assessment Task

The Assessment Task is a written task completed by students during class time. It is not marked by the class teacher, but is sent to the State Examinations Commission (SEC) for marking as part of the state-certified examination in Geography. The Assessment Task is specified by the NCCA and is related to the learning on which the second Classroom-Based Assessment is based. In the case of Geography, this will be **My Geography**. The details of the Assessment Task are outlined in Table 2 below, with further information provided on p.27 of these guidelines.

	Format	Student preparation	Completed
The Assessment Task (AT)	Students complete a specified written task which is sent to the SEC for marking	The Assessment Task will link to <i>My geography</i> (CBA 2)	Following completion of the second Classroom-Based Assessment in Year 3

Table 2: Assessment Task for Classroom-Based Assessment 2, My Geography

Classroom-Based Assessment 1: Geography in the news

Geography in the news provides opportunities for students to engage in practical, authentic learning experiences that reflect the relevance of the study of geography to the world around them. *Geography in the news* provides students with opportunities to actively observe the interactions and interconnections between people, places, environments, and spatial patterns. This Classroom-Based Assessment asks students to research and draw conclusions on the implications of geographical events through a real-life example.

Students will select a recent geographical event of significance on a local, national or global scale, as reported in the media. Students will undertake a structured inquiry into their chosen geographical event and analyse the significance of this event through the lens of the elements: *processes, patterns, systems and scale, geographical skills and sustainability*. It is envisaged that the structured inquiry process outlined in Table 3 below (p. 12) will encourage students to investigate beyond their original

chosen media source and widen the scope of their research to consider a broader range of sources and perspectives. Finally, students will craft a response to this event to be presented at the end of the three-week period. Students may shape their response using a range of different formats, to be decided upon in agreement with the teacher facilitating the CBA.

The learning outcomes assessed will, to an extent, depend on the topic chosen and the medium in which the work is presented. In this CBA, irrespective of the topic chosen, the student is required to demonstrate knowledge, understanding, awareness and skills in conducting a structured inquiry (see Table 3, p. 12 below), which explores and analyses if and how the elements of the Geography specification (processes, patterns, systems and scale, geographical skills and sustainability) are manifested in the response to the chosen media source.

Process for the completion of the Classroom-Based Assessment 1:

Geography in the news

Figure 1 sets out the process for conducting a Classroom-Based Assessment. The aim of this process is to provide guidance for teachers as they support their students completing their Classroom-Based Assessments.



Figure 1: Process for conducting Geography in the News CBA

Getting ready



Student preparation

Students should have developed some knowledge, understanding and skills across the three strands of study, *Exploring the physical world*, *Exploring how we interact with the physical world* and *Exploring people, place and change*, before engaging with the first Classroom-Based Assessment, **Geography in the news**. As part of the ongoing teaching, learning and assessment of the learning outcomes for Geography, students should have opportunities to develop research and evaluation skills which will help them to engage meaningfully with *Geography in the news*. Where opportunities arise, their curiosity should be fostered to explore topics and ideas that are of interest to them and they should be encouraged to identify relevant links between classroom learning and everyday life. Such experiences will be of benefit to them as they engage with *Geography in the news* at a level appropriate to their age and stage of learning.

This Classroom-Based Assessment promotes student curiosity and engagement when students:

- identify and choose the geographical event that will form the focus of their response
- ask geographical questions
- choose the format(s) in which to present their response
- develop their ideas through consideration of the interactions, interconnections and implications of the geographical event
- consider a wide variety of media sources to ensure a broader range of perspectives are researched and considered
- collaborate through the discussion and exploration of the researched information
- consider, where appropriate, how their chosen event relates to environmental, economic and social sustainability issues.

Whilst the Classroom-Based Assessment is summative, it has a formative value and should be used as a tool to provide feedback to students, parents and teachers on student progress and learning. At an appropriate moment in their learning, students should be familiarised with the Features of Quality that will be used to judge the quality of their work.

Teacher preparation

Planning for teaching, learning and assessment should develop students' knowledge, understanding, skills and values across the learning outcomes of the specification incrementally in advance of and

during the completion of the Classroom-Based Assessment. The role of the teacher should be to guide, support, enable and provide direction to students as they complete their **Geography in the news** Classroom-Based Assessment.

It is recommended that teachers discuss the Classroom-Based Assessment with colleagues and plan any teaching and learning that may be required. Teachers are encouraged to facilitate students to see the relevance in what they are learning to everyday living. A non-linear approach across learning outcomes and strands is suggested in the geography specification; this will provide opportunities for students to experience interactions, interconnections and implications across different areas of study.

In order to prepare for the Classroom-Based Assessment, teachers should familiarise themselves with the following documentation available on www.curriculumonline.ie

- Junior Cycle Geography Specification
- Junior Cycle Geography: Guidelines for the Classroom-Based Assessment and Assessment Task
- Annotated examples of student work
- Assessment and Reporting in junior cycle (www.ncca.ie/junior-cycle/assessment-and-reporting)

Completing CBA 1: Geography in the news



Students will undertake this Classroom-Based Assessment using a structured inquiry process to explore their chosen geographical event and prepare a response to be presented at the end of the three-week period. Details of how this inquiry process is undertaken are outlined in the table below.

Structured inquiry process

This process involves students asking questions, gathering data, evaluating and interpreting their findings, and presenting information. It encourages collaboration and communication with their peers and experts in other fields.

What your response should include:	
<i>Processes, patterns, systems and scale</i>	<i>Sustainability</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify how the chosen media source relates to learning about a geographical process, pattern or system. ▪ Prepare a detailed, informed response explaining how the event is geographically significant on a local, national or global scale. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Outline the sustainability considerations in relation to the chosen geographical event.
How you will prepare your response:	
<i>Geographical skills</i>	
<p>Students are encouraged to draw on as many geographical skills that are applicable to the individual response through the CBA process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students will prepare a response that demonstrates engagement with the key geographical questions of who, what, where, when, how and why ▪ Students will demonstrate the interactions, interconnections and implications active in the chosen geographical event ▪ To investigate the key geographical questions identified, students will engage in research from a variety of sources to develop information that will inform responses and conclusions ▪ Students will interpret and organise their research to demonstrate how their response has been informed ▪ Students will analyse their research findings to prepare their response addressing how the media source relates to a geographical process, pattern and system, and why it is geographically significant. 	

Table 3: The structured inquiry process

Evidence of learning

The Classroom-Based Assessment can be produced in any format that is appropriate for capturing the ideas of the students. This could be for example in written form (a report or media article), in digital form (as a blog, webpage or slide presentation), in visual form (a graphic presentation or a display) or in audio form (a podcast or a voice-over). This list is not intended to be exhaustive, but serves to offer suggestions as to the possible choices in the mode of presentation.

Engaging with and following the structured inquiry process outlined above will encourage students to investigate beyond their original chosen media source and widen the scope of their research to consider a broader range of sources and perspectives.

Students may undertake this response on an individual basis or as part of a pair or group. If working as part of a pair/group, each student's individual role and contribution to the work will be the focus of the assessment. It is important that each student involved in the pair/group notes accurately their own part in the process and their contribution to the group's work (perhaps using a symbol or their initials) to assist the teacher in identifying and assessing their individual contribution to the response.

Geography in the news: Advice for students

Work for this assessment will be supported by your classroom teacher. In accordance with the advice laid down in these guidelines and under the supervision of your teacher, you will have input into the choice in selecting the geographical news event you explore for this CBA. Your teacher may offer guidance where proposed topics might be considered controversial or sensitive and may discuss the appropriateness of this topic with you before you proceed with your CBA. Once your classroom teacher and yourself have agreed on the geographical event that will form the basis of your Classroom-Based Assessment, you could ask yourself the following kinds of questions:

- Have I considered the key geographical questions of who, what, where, when, how and why?
- What are the main environmental, economic or social concerns with this geographical event?
- Are there any links in the geographical event between people and the environment?
- Does this event have any connection with other recent geographical events?
- In what ways does the event impact on the human environment?
- In what ways does the event impact on physical environment?

- What might this event mean for the people living close by?
- What are the consequences of the geographical event?
- Is the response investigated and organised in a clear and logical manner?
- Have I checked that the information I researched is reliable?
- If possible, did I interview anyone who could offer further insight into the event?
- Did I research using a variety of sources to ensure I have a balanced and broad understanding of the event?
- Is the response presented in a creative and effective format?

You may work on the Classroom-Based Assessment as an individual, in pairs or in groups. If undertaking the CBA as part of a pair or group, it is important to keep note of your own part in the process and your contribution to the group's work. You should indicate this in your response by using a symbol or your initials or a method agreed with your class teacher.

Deciding on the level of achievement: Geography in the news



Features of Quality

There are four level descriptors of achievement in each Classroom-Based Assessment: *Exceptional*, *Above expectations*, *In line with expectations*, and *Yet to meet expectations*. All work submitted is judged to fit one of these four descriptors.

Teachers use the Features of Quality, set out in these guidelines, to decide the level of achievement in each Classroom-Based Assessment. The Features of Quality are the criteria that will be used to assess the student work as best fitting one of the following descriptors:

Exceptional describes a piece of work that reflects the Features of Quality for the Classroom-Based Assessment to a very high standard. While not necessarily perfect, the strengths of the work far

outstrip its flaws, which are minor. Suggestions for improvement are easily addressable by the student.

Above expectations describes a piece of work that reflects the Features of Quality for the Classroom-Based Assessment very well. The student shows a clear understanding of how to complete each area of the task. Feedback from the teacher might point to the necessity to address some aspect of the work in need of further attention or polishing, but on the whole the work is of a high standard.

In line with expectations describes a piece of work that reflects most of the Features of Quality for the Classroom-Based Assessment well. It shows a good understanding of the task in hand and is free from significant error. Feedback might point to areas needing further attention or correction, but the work is generally competent and accurate.

Yet to meet expectations describes a piece of work that falls somewhat short of the demands of the Classroom-Based Assessment and its associated Features of Quality. Perhaps the student has made a good attempt, but the task has not been grasped clearly or is marred by significant lapses. Feedback will draw attention to fundamental shortcomings that need to be addressed.

When using the Features of Quality to assess the level of student achievement in a Classroom-Based Assessment, teachers use 'on-balance' judgement. The teacher should read the Features of Quality (starting with *Yet to meet expectations*) until they reach a descriptor that best describes the work being assessed. While it should be noted that none of the descriptors imply faultless achievement, evidence of work for the award of Exceptional should closely match the criteria for that level within the Features of Quality. Where it is not clearly evident which quality descriptor should apply, teachers must come to a judgment, based on the evidence from the student's work, to select the descriptor that best matches the student's work overall. This 'best fit' approach allows teachers to select the descriptor that 'on balance' describes the work being assessed.

Teachers should not assume that the results of a group of students being assessed will follow any particular distribution pattern, as the students' work is being judged only against the Features of Quality rather than other students' performances.

Teacher judgements about the quality of student work, with the aim of arriving at a shared understanding of standards and expectations, are supported by annotated examples of student work published on <https://curriculumonline.ie/Junior-cycle/Junior-Cycle-Subjects/Geography>; by the features of quality in these guidelines; and by collaboration and discussion with colleagues during Subject Learning and Assessment Review (SLAR) meetings.

Features of Quality: Geography in the news

Exceptional

The response comprehensively engages with key geographical questions, including analysis of geographical significance and sustainability and draws insightful, relevant conclusions

The response demonstrates a comprehensive awareness of the processes, patterns and systems active in the chosen geographical event

The response is exceptionally detailed, informed, well-organised and creative.

Above expectations

The response effectively engages with key geographical questions, including consideration of geographical significance and sustainability, and draws relevant conclusions

The response demonstrates very good awareness of the processes, patterns and systems active in the chosen geographical event

The response is very detailed and informed and is well-organised to a very clear purpose.

In line with expectations

The response engages with some important geographical questions, includes some consideration of geographical significance and sustainability, and draws some interesting, though not always relevant conclusions

The response shows some awareness of the processes, patterns and systems active in the chosen geographical event

The response is organised to a purpose and includes details and information which demonstrate good understanding of the chosen geographical event.

Yet to meet expectations

The response engages with few geographical questions and draws limited or no conclusions

The response shows little or no awareness of the processes, patterns and systems active in the chosen geographical event

The response is haphazard or poorly organised and lacks sufficient detail to demonstrate understanding of the chosen geographical event.

Classroom-Based Assessment 2 - My geography

My geography provides students with the opportunity to apply the knowledge and experience gained through the first Classroom-Based Assessment to undertake an active investigation into geographical aspect(s) of their local area. Having experienced and engaged with the key geographical questions of who, what, where, when, how and why during **Geography in the news**, students will continue to develop this learning in their on-going classroom learning and through an investigation of local geographical aspect(s). **My geography** provides a frame for students to actively explore and engage with the interactions and linkages between people, places, environments, and spatial patterns in their local area and consider the related implications for the human and physical environment.

Students will undertake a structured inquiry and prepare a response on geographical aspect(s) in their local area over a three-week period. As with CBA1, students will complete their response through the lens of the elements; *processes, patterns, systems and scale, geographical skills and sustainability*.

In this CBA, irrespective of the topic chosen, the student is required to demonstrate knowledge, understanding, awareness and skills in conducting a structured inquiry (see Table 4 below, p. 21) which explores and analyses if and how the elements of the Geography specification (processes, patterns, systems and scale, geographical skills and sustainability) manifest in their chosen geographical aspect(s).

Students may shape their response using a range of different formats, to be decided upon in agreement with the teacher facilitating the CBA. In this CBA, students are encouraged to engage in geographical investigations, including field work, as part of their data gathering. The learning outcomes assessed will, to an extent, depend on the topic chosen and the medium in which the work is presented.

Process for the completion of the Classroom-Based Assessment 2:

My geography

Figure 2 below sets out the process for conducting Classroom-Based Assessment 2: **My geography**. The aim of this process is to provide guidance for teachers as they support their students completing this Classroom-Based Assessment.

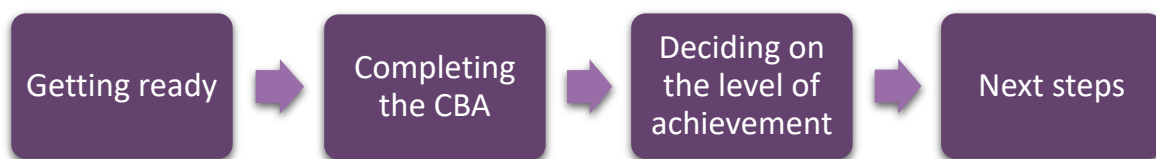


Figure 2: Process for conducting CBA 2: *My geography*

Getting ready



Student preparation

Students should have developed some knowledge, understanding and skills across the three strands of study, *Exploring the physical world*, *Exploring how we interact with the physical world* and *Exploring people, place and change*, in order to undertake the investigation. As part of the ongoing teaching, learning and assessment of the learning outcomes for Geography, students should have opportunities to develop research and evaluation skills which will help them to engage meaningfully with *My geography*. Students will draw on the learning and experience of the first Classroom-Based Assessment (Geography in the news) to complete this in-depth investigation into geographical

aspect(s) in their local area. Students' curiosity should be fostered to explore topics and ideas that are of interest to them and they should be encouraged to identify relevant links between classroom learning and everyday life.

This Classroom-Based Assessment promotes student curiosity and engagement when students:

- identify and choose the local geographical aspect(s) that will form the focus of their response
- ask the key geographical questions that will support their investigation
- choose the format(s) in which to present their response
- develop their ideas through the consideration of the interactions, interconnections and implications of the geographical aspect(s)
- consider a wide variety of approaches to data collection
- collaborate through the discussion and exploration of the researched data
- identify how their chosen geographical aspect(s) relates to their own lives and environment, both in the present and for the future
- are offered the opportunity to engage in geographical and field investigations.

Whilst the Classroom-Based Assessment is summative, it has a formative value and should be used to provide feedback to students, parents and teachers on student progress and learning. At an appropriate moment in their learning, students should be familiarised with the Features of Quality that will be used to judge the quality of their work.

Teacher preparation

Planning for teaching, learning and assessment should develop students' knowledge, understanding, skills and values across the learning outcomes of the specification incrementally in advance of and during the completion of the Classroom-Based Assessment. The role of the teacher should be to guide, support, enable and provide direction to students as they complete the **My geography** Classroom - Based Assessment.

It is recommended that teachers discuss the Classroom-Based Assessment with colleagues and plan any teaching and learning that may be required. Teachers are encouraged to facilitate students to see

the relevance in what they are learning to everyday living. A non-linear approach across learning outcomes and strands is suggested in the geography specification; this will provide opportunities for students to experience the interactions, interconnections and implications across different areas of study.

In order to prepare for the Classroom-Based Assessment, teachers should familiarise themselves with the following documentation available on www.curriculumonline.ie

- Junior Cycle Geography Specification
- Junior Cycle Geography: Guidelines for the Classroom-Based Assessment and Assessment Task
- Annotated examples of student work
- Assessment and Reporting in junior cycle (www.ncca.ie/junior-cycle/assessment-and-reporting)

Completing Classroom-Based Assessment 2: My Geography



Students will undertake this Classroom-Based Assessment using a structured inquiry process to explore the local geographical aspect(s) and prepare a response to be presented at the end of the three-week period. The details of how this inquiry process is undertaken is outlined in Table 4 below.

Structured inquiry process

This process involves students asking questions, gathering data, evaluating and interpreting their findings, and presenting information. It encourages collaboration and communication with their peers and experts in other fields.

What your report should include:	
<i>Processes, patterns, systems and scale</i>	<i>Sustainability</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Investigate how the chosen geographical aspect relates to learning about a geographical process, pattern or system. ▪ Prepare a detailed response demonstrating the geographical significance of the chosen aspect investigated ▪ Outline the impact of the chosen aspect on the local area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Outline the sustainability considerations in relation to the chosen geographical aspect.
How you will prepare your report:	
<i>Geographical skills</i>	
<p>Students are encouraged to draw on as many geographical skills that are applicable to the individual response through the CBA process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students will prepare a response that demonstrates engagement with the key geographical questions of who, what, where, when, how and why ▪ Students will demonstrate the interactions, interconnections and implications active in the chosen geographical aspect(s) ▪ To investigate the key geographical questions identified, students will gather data from a wide variety of sources to develop information. Students are encouraged to engage in geographical investigations, including field work as part of their data gathering ▪ Students will interpret, evaluate and organise the data gathered to demonstrate how their response has been informed ▪ students will analyse their data to prepare an investigation response to the chosen geographical aspect(s) 	

Table 4: The structured inquiry process

Evidence of learning

The response should provide the following information:

- Introduction to the geographical aspect
- Investigation questions
- Data collection
- Analysis
- Findings
- Conclusion
- Evaluation
- Reflection

This Classroom-Based Assessment can be produced in any format that is deemed appropriate for capturing the ideas of the students. This could be for example in written form (a report or journal article); in digital form (as a blog, webpage or slide presentation); in visual form (a graphic presentation, a poster display or geographical samples from the investigation) or in audio form (a podcast or a voice-over). This list is not intended to be exhaustive, but serves to offer suggestions as to the possible choices in the mode of presentation.

Students may undertake this response on an individual basis or as part of a pair or group. If working as part of a pair/group, each student's individual role and contribution to the work will be the focus of the assessment. It is important that each student involved in the pair/group notes accurately their own part in the process and their contribution to the group's work (perhaps using a symbol or their initials) to assist the teacher in identifying and assessing their individual contribution to the response.

An evaluation and a student reflection is an important aspect of this CBA. To assist students and teachers in considering this aspect of the response, a sample reflection and evaluation template is provided as Appendix A.

My geography: Advice for students

Work for this assessment will be supported by your classroom teacher. Once your classroom teacher and yourself have agreed on the local geographical aspect(s) that will form the basis of this Classroom-Based Assessment, you could ask yourself the following kinds of questions:

- Have I asked the key geographical questions of who, what, where, when, how and why?
- What is the potential local environmental, economic or social impact of my chosen aspect(s)?
- What are the future consequences of this aspect(s) on a local or a wider scale?
- Have I gathered data from a wide variety of sources?
- Have I checked that the data I have gathered is reliable?
- If possible did I interview or have a conversation with someone who can offer further insights or expertise to this aspect?
- Have I met with and talked to people who were impacted by this aspect?
- Does this aspect have any connections, consequences or implications on a wider scale?
- Is the response investigated and organised in a clear logical manner?
- Is it presented in a creative and effective manner whichever the chosen format?
- Have I included an evaluation and reflection on my investigation?
- Who or what organisation might be interested in the findings from my investigation?

You may work on the Classroom-Based Assessment as an individual, in pairs or in groups. If undertaking the CBA as part of a pair or group, it is important to keep note of your own part in the process and your contribution to the group's work. You should indicate this in your response by using a symbol or your initials or a method agreed with your class teacher.

Deciding on the level of achievement: My geography



Features of Quality

There are four level descriptors of achievement in each Classroom-Based Assessment: *Exceptional*, *Above expectations*, *In line with expectations*, and *Yet to meet expectations*. All work submitted is judged to fit one of these four descriptors.

Teachers use the Features of Quality, set out in these guidelines, to decide the level of achievement in each Classroom-Based Assessment. The Features of Quality are the criteria that will be used to assess the student work as best fitting one of the following descriptors:

Exceptional describes a piece of work that reflects the Features of Quality for the Classroom-Based Assessment to a very high standard. While not necessarily perfect, the strengths of the work far outstrip its flaws, which are minor. Suggestions for improvement are easily addressable by the student.

Above expectations describes a piece of work that reflects the Features of Quality for the Classroom-Based Assessment very well. The student shows a clear understanding of how to complete each area of the task. Feedback from the teacher might point to the necessity to address some aspect of the work in need of further attention or polishing, but on the whole the work is of a high standard.

In line with expectations describes a piece of work that reflects most of the Features of Quality for the Classroom-Based Assessment well. It shows a good understanding of the task in hand and is free from significant error. Feedback might point to areas needing further attention or correction, but the work is generally competent and accurate.

Yet to meet expectations describes a piece of work that falls somewhat short of the demands of the Classroom-Based Assessment and its associated Features of Quality. Perhaps the student has made a good attempt, but the task has not been grasped clearly or is marred by significant lapses. Feedback will draw attention to fundamental shortcomings that need to be addressed.

When using the Features of Quality to assess the level of student achievement in a Classroom-Based Assessment, teachers use 'on-balance' judgement. The teacher should read the Features of Quality (starting with *Yet to meet expectations*) until they reach a descriptor that best describes the work being assessed. While it should be noted that none of the descriptors imply faultless achievement, evidence of work for the award of Exceptional should closely match the criteria for that level within the Features of Quality. Where it is not clearly evident which quality descriptor should apply, teachers must come to a judgment, based on the evidence from the student's work, to select the descriptor that best matches the student's work overall. This 'best fit' approach allows teachers to select the descriptor that 'on balance' describes the work being assessed.

Teachers should not assume that the results of a group of students being assessed will follow any particular distribution pattern, as the students' work is being judged only against the Features of Quality rather than other students' performances.

Teacher judgements about the quality of student work, with the aim of arriving at a shared understanding of standards and expectations, are supported by annotated examples of student work published on www.curriculumonline.ie; by the features of quality in these guidelines; and by collaboration and discussion with colleagues during Subject Learning and Assessment Review (SLAR) meetings.

Features of Quality: My geography

Exceptional

The response comprehensively engages with key geographical questions, including analysis of sustainability concerns and draws insightful, relevant conclusions

The response demonstrates a comprehensive awareness of the processes, patterns and systems active in the chosen geographical aspect

The response is exceptionally well-organised, demonstrating active engagement in gathering and analysing data from a wide range of sources.

Above expectations

The response effectively engages with key geographical questions, including consideration of sustainability concerns, and draws relevant conclusions

The response demonstrates very good awareness of the processes, patterns and systems active in the chosen geographical aspect

The response is very detailed and well-organised, demonstrating good engagement in gathering and analysing data from a range of sources.

In line with expectations

The response engages with some geographical questions, including some consideration of sustainability concerns and draws some interesting, though not always relevant conclusions

The response demonstrates some awareness of the processes, patterns and systems active in the chosen geographical aspect

The response is organised to a purpose and includes details and information which shows some engagement in gathering and analysing data from a number of sources.

Yet to meet expectations

The response engages with few geographical questions and draws limited or no conclusions

The response shows little or no awareness of the processes, patterns and systems active in the chosen geographical aspect

The response is haphazard or poorly organised and there is little detail on the sources used to gather data.

Next steps



Assessment Task:

Students undertake a written Assessment Task (AT) to be submitted to the State Examinations Commission (SEC) for marking as part of the state-certified examination for Geography. The Assessment Task will be allocated 10% of the marks available for this examination.

The Assessment Task is directly related to the second Classroom-Based Assessment, *My geography*.

The Assessment Task will assess students in aspects of their learning including:

- their ability to reflect on the development of their geographical thinking through engaging in the research process in completing the *My geography* CBA
- their ability to evaluate new knowledge or understanding that has emerged through their experience of the Classroom-Based Assessment
- their ability to reflect on the skills they have developed, and their capacity to apply them to unfamiliar situations in the future
- their ability to reflect on how their appreciation of Geography has been influenced through the experience of the Classroom-Based Assessment
- their reflections on how their experience of *My geography* has influenced their attitudes and values.

This Assessment Task will be undertaken following the completion of the second Classroom-Based Assessment. Schools will have some flexibility in choosing the class period for completion. The mark awarded for the Assessment Task will be aggregated by the SEC with the mark awarded for the written examination to determine the overall descriptor for the state-certified examination in Geography.

Subject Learning and Assessment Review meeting

Shared understanding of standards within junior cycle will arise through professional discussion in Subject Learning and Assessment Review (SLAR) meetings, where staff bring their own examples of student work and compare their judgements with other colleagues and with annotated examples of student work provided by the NCCA. Over time, this process will help develop a greater understanding of standards and ensure consistency of judgement about student performance.

Samples of CBA 1: Geography in the news and CBA 2: My geography by students will be gathered for discussion at the Subject Learning and Assessment Review (SLAR) meetings. In preparation for the Subject Learning and Assessment Review meeting, each teacher will identify one sample of students' work for each descriptor, where feasible, and will have these available for discussion at the meeting. Further details on managing and participating in the Subject Learning and Assessment Review meeting are included in Appendix A and can be accessed at <https://www.ncca.ie/en/junior-cycle/assessment-and-reporting/slar-meetings>.

Recording and reporting Classroom-Based Assessment results

Following the Subject Learning and Assessment Review each individual teacher re-considers the judgement they had made of their student's work, based on the outcomes of the meeting, and where necessary makes the appropriate adjustments to the level of achievement awarded to the work. A record of the final descriptors awarded is kept by the class teacher and is shared with the school principal. The descriptors awarded are used in reporting progress and achievement to parents and students as part of the school's ongoing reporting procedures and through the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA).

Where it arises that a student does not submit any work for their Classroom-Based Assessment, a descriptor cannot be awarded, as there is no work to discuss against the Features of Quality. In such cases, 'Not reported' should be selected when inputting results for the JCPA. Further information in relation to reporting Classroom-Based Assessment descriptors for the JCPA is available from the DES at the following link: <https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Services>Returns/Post-Primary-Online-Database-P-POD-Project/>.

Using feedback

Providing effective feedback is a crucial step in using CBA 1: Geography in the news and CBA 2: My geography to support learning. Students will be informed of the descriptor they have been awarded once the Subject Learning and Assessment Review (SLAR) meeting has taken place and its outcomes have been processed. However, effective feedback goes beyond the naming of the descriptor awarded. Feedback on the strengths of the student's work, and on areas for improvement can be used to support their future learning. Further information on the use of feedback can be found at <https://www.ncca.ie/en/junior-cycle/assessment-and-reporting/focus-on-learning>.

Querying a result

Queries in relation to the descriptors awarded for the Classroom-Based Assessments, where they arise, will be dealt with by the school.

Appendix A: Student Evaluation and Reflection Template for CBA 2

CBA 2: My geography	Title/Aspect(s) Chosen:	
What did I enjoy the most about completing this CBA? Give details		
What were the main challenges I faced? How could I overcome these in future investigations?		
What new geographical skills did I develop when completing this CBA? How could I use these in the future?		
Who or what organisation might be interested in my research/data collected? Why?		
Student:	Teacher:	Date:

Appendix B: Support for teacher judgement: Subject Learning and Assessment Review

Subject Learning and Assessment Review meetings enable teachers to collaboratively reach consistency in their judgments of student work against common, externally-set Features of Quality. Greater understanding of standards and expectations will develop over time as teachers come together in professional discussion to reflect on the quality of their own students' work, informed by the subject specification, assessment guidelines and other support material including annotated examples of students' work provided by the NCCA.

Overview

The review process is centred on teachers discussing student work at structured meetings. It will play an important role in helping teachers to develop an understanding of standards and expectations by enabling them to reflect on the evidence of students' work and to share the learning and teaching strategies supporting that work.

The objectives of the review process are to achieve

- greater consistency of teachers' judgement
- better feedback to students
- greater alignment of judgements with expected standards

and to assure parents and others that students are receiving appropriate recognition of their achievements in line with standards and expectations.

The time for review meetings will be provided for in the school calendar from the allocated 22 hours of professional time for each full-time teacher each year. One teacher of each subject will be allocated two additional hours by school management to prepare for and coordinate each review meeting. This role will normally be rotated among the relevant teachers.

Each meeting will

- be subject-specific
- be approximately two hours long
- take place at a time as near as possible to the completion of the Classroom-Based Assessment

- involve the review of student work related to a specific Classroom-Based Assessment.

Where there is a single teacher of a subject in a school, the teacher can be facilitated to participate in a Subject Learning and Assessment Review meeting in another school. In the case of an Irish-medium school, the single teacher of a subject can participate in a Subject Learning and Assessment Review meeting in another Irish-medium school.

Facilitator's guide

Teachers will fulfil the role of facilitator during Subject Learning and Assessment Review meetings on a rotational basis. The facilitator will model effective questioning during the discussion of the samples of student work focusing on how well students' work matches the Features of Quality. During review meetings, where it is not clearly evident which descriptor should apply, the group should look for the evidence in the student's work that matches all or nearly all of the Features of Quality associated with a particular descriptor. This 'best fit' approach allows teachers at the review meeting to select the descriptor that 'on-balance' best matches the work being assessed. The facilitator will submit a short report (see Appendix D) of the review meeting to the school principal.

Teachers should not assume that the results of a group of students being assessed will follow any particular distribution plan as the student's work is being judged only against the Features of Quality rather than other students' performance.

Before the meeting

As a first step, teachers may find it helpful to review some of the relevant NCCA-annotated examples prior to coming to decisions about their own students' work.

Once students have completed their Classroom-Based Assessment, the teacher will carry out a provisional assessment of the students' work based on the Features of Quality. These provisional assessments may be modified in light of the discussions that take place at the Subject Learning and Assessment Review meeting.

The teacher will make a note of the descriptor allocated to each student and any other point they may wish or find useful to refer to during and after the Subject Learning and Assessment Review meeting. This note will be for the teacher's own use.

In preparation for the Subject Learning and Assessment Review meeting, each teacher will identify one sample of student's work for each descriptor, where feasible, and will have these available for discussion at the meeting.

During the meeting

The facilitator leads the meeting and keeps the record of the decisions made in a template, which is used to generate the report of the meeting (see Appendix D). It is recommended that the meeting should generally follow this sequence:

- The facilitator explains that the purpose of the meeting is to support consistency of judgement about students' work and to develop a common understanding about the quality of student learning. The value of the meeting in providing feedback to students on how they might improve their work should also be highlighted.
- The facilitator asks one member of staff to introduce a sample of work they have assessed as Yet to reach expectations.
- Following a short introduction by the teacher, the facilitator leads a general discussion on the extent to which the student's work matches the relevant Features of Quality. If the meeting affirms the judgement, this is noted in the meeting record by the facilitator.
- Where there is a lack of agreement, the facilitator should refer to relevant annotated examples of student work provided by the NCCA and, if appropriate, a couple of examples of student work that other teachers in the group have assessed and awarded that descriptor to.
- The facilitator should look to establish consensus during the discussion of examples but the emphasis should be on developing teachers' professional knowledge and skills rather than on seeking unanimous agreement over every Feature of Quality in every example.
- The emphasis in affirming judgements during the review meetings should always be on a 'best fit' approach which allows teachers to agree the descriptor that 'on-balance' is most appropriate for the work being assessed.
- While reasonable time should be allowed for discussion, the facilitator should use his/her professional judgement to decide when it would be appropriate to proceed to the next sample.
- If possible, there should be discussion of at least two samples for each descriptor and the facilitator should ensure that each teacher has at least one of their samples discussed during the meeting.
- The process is repeated, in turn, with samples assessed as In line with expectations, Above expectations and Exceptional being discussed and shared in the group. At the end of the meeting, the facilitator briefly summarises the key points from the discussion.

- It is important that each teacher notes the implications of the decisions made during the meeting for the rest of the student work they have already assessed, particularly in the case of descriptors where their judgement did not align with the view of the majority of teachers at the meeting.

After the meeting

After the meeting, each teacher considers the assessment of their students' work based on the outcomes of the meeting and, where it is considered necessary, makes the appropriate adjustments to their provisional assessments. Following the Subject Learning and Assessment Review meeting, the facilitator submits their report from the meeting focusing on the outcomes of the discussion of student work at the meeting, and submits it to the school principal.

The facilitator may also ask teachers, should they wish, to contribute some student work to a bank of examples

- to support the induction of new teachers
- to support future Subject Learning and Assessment Review meetings
- to use with students and parents in demonstrating the standard of work achieved.

Appendix C: Subject Learning and Assessment Review Meeting:

Facilitator's Report

Subject:	Date/time:
Attendance	
Key decisions taken	
Points of note for future review meetings	
Any further comment?	
Facilitator Date	

