Grade 12 Geography: Exam Preparation & Skills Guide

Grade 12 | Geography | Study Guide | 2024

Free Study Resources for South African Matric Learners

1. Mapwork Skills (Topographic Maps)

Gradient:	(Difference in altitude) / (Distance) expressed as ratio or %
Horizontal equivalent (HE):	Map distance x map scale denominator
Vertical interval (VI):	Difference in altitude between two points
Map scale:	E.g. 1:50 000 means 1 cm on map = 50 000 cm (500 m) on ground
Bearing:	Angle measured clockwise from north (0-360 degrees)

Reading Contour Lines

- Contour lines connect points of equal height
- Close together = steep slope; far apart = gentle slope
- V-shape pointing uphill = valley/river valley
- V-shape pointing downhill = ridge/spur
- Closed circles = hill/mountain (inner circles higher)
- Depression: circles with tick marks pointing inward

2. Geographic Information Systems (GIS)

- GIS: computer system for capturing, storing, analysing geographic data
- Layers: different data overlaid on a map (roads, rivers, land use, elevation)
- Applications: urban planning, disaster management, environmental monitoring, agriculture
- Remote sensing: collecting data from satellites or aircraft
- Google Maps/Earth: everyday examples of GIS technology

3. Exam Paper Structure

- Question 1: Mapwork (compulsory); 30 marks; read map carefully
- Questions 2-3: choose ONE physical geography question
- Questions 4-5: choose ONE human geography question
- Question 6: GIS (often multiple choice type)
- Total: 150 marks in 2.5 hours

4. Answering Geography Questions

- For "explain" questions: state the process, give the mechanism, give the result
- For "describe" questions: state what you see/observe without explaining why
- For "discuss" questions: both description and explanation required
- Use geographic terminology correctly; vague language loses marks
- For fieldwork questions: describe method, equipment used, potential source of error
- Sketch maps and diagrams earn marks; must be neat and labelled

TIP Mapwork: practise measuring distances with a ruler and applying scale. For bearing, use a protractor from north, measure clockwise. Altitude is read from contour lines or spot heights (indicated by a dot with number).