



AS and A Level Edexcel Revision Booklet

Topic 2B: Coastal Landscapes and Change

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Contents

Thank You for Choosing ZigZag Education	
Teacher Feedback Opportunity	
Terms and Conditions of Use	
Teacher's Introduction	
Students' Introduction	
Coastal Landscapes and Processes	
Activities	
Erosion Processes and Landforms	
Activities	
Transport and Deposition – Processes and Landforms	
Activities	
Subaerial Processes (Weathering, Mass Movement and Associated Landforms)	
Activities	
Causes of Sea Level Change (Past, Present and Future)	
Activities	
The Effects of Coastal Recession and Flooding – and Why It's a Problem	
Activities	
Coastal Management	
Activities	
Exam Advice	
Answers to Consolidation Questions	

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Teacher's Introduction

The revision booklets in this series are designed to support your students as they study AS Edexcel Geography (8GE0) and A Level Edexcel Geography (9GE0). These revision summaries match the Edexcel specification perfectly. **This particular set supports Topic 2B: Coastal Landscapes and Change, examined in Paper 1.**

The concept is that *all* students need a clearly explained, concise yet comprehensive body of notes to revise from, both as they progress through the course and when preparing for the end-of-course examination. For this reason, the summaries are provided in manageable chunks and are provided in both A4 and A5 formats for easy photocopying and reference for students, right up to the moment they walk into the examination hall.

Since revision should be ongoing throughout the course, it is recommended that you issue students with the relevant revision booklet as they progress through the course, rather than as a complete revision booklet in the run-up to the examinations.

By use of bullet points, boxes and grids, these revision booklets provide succinct and comprehensive coverage of the specification content – probably far more than a standard revision summary.

Each topic follows a clear structure of:

- **Key words:** lots of key words are clearly defined, and by covering up the definitions students can easily self-test their memory of these all-important terms.
- **Key points:** these form the main body of the summaries for each topic. Concise yet comprehensive, they provide a solid bank of notes to support students' knowledge, understanding and recall.
- **Core content:** the main content of the specification in bullet points, boxes and grids. Suggested examples allow students to name-drop examples in their exam, or to use as a starting point for further research.
- **If you only remember these three things...:** the three most important takeaways from the topic.
- **Consolidation questions:** several quick questions on the core content – designed to test understanding. Points have been retained.
- **Take it further:** offers suggestions to support the option of extending learning beyond the classroom.
- **Student checks:** useful checklist to help students monitor their own learning.

Each pack also contains a **students' introduction** which introduces the topic and structure; introduces command words, AOs and level marking, along with exam tips on how to use the booklet. At the end tips are included on time management, and planning, along with an introduction to synopticity.

By using this resource, teachers will know that all students have the key points for all topics in written format. It saves time in class for teachers and decreases the amount of preparation time for students.

This resource also helps achieve greater equality among students of differing abilities. Students make the least helpful notes from which to study and revise outside class. Revision summary notes help to overcome this problem and promote greater equality.

And remember, these revision booklets are also perfect to refer back to as end-of-course examination – especially useful now with linear examinations.

I trust that you and your students will enjoy using these revision summaries as much as we have enjoyed making them for you.

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* resulting from minor specification changes, suggestions from teachers and peer reviews, or occasional errors reported by customers

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Students' Introduction

What's the topic?

This revision booklet is for Topic 2B: Coastal Landscapes and Change. You will be sitting this paper in Paper 1, Section B.

Here's a quick overview of the things you might find in the exam. However, expect sometimes exam boards can throw in a curve ball – a different type of question – but don't be too alarmed. Just read the questions carefully and be ready to adapt.

You'll be presented with a range of questions – remember that they ramp up in difficulty.

- Firstly, you might be presented with a short factual recall question.
- Then you might be given a couple of figures – maps, charts and data. You probably won't be asked to see how you cope with unfamiliar sources – how you analyse them. You might have heard the term 'AO2'. AO2 marks require you to show that you understand what it means.
 - You may be asked to use the figure(s) and your knowledge to answer the question.
 - These might be medium-length questions, worth around 6 marks.
- Finally, you'll get a longer, essay-based question – maybe worth 20 marks. You'll probably be asked for your viewpoints or to weigh up two sides of an argument. You may also be able to use a case study to support your answer. Justify your opinion(s), and support it with facts and balanced arguments if you are reaching for the higher marks. You'll need to draw on your knowledge and offer a supported opinion. PEE or, even better, PEEL here! And no, we don't recommend you get out a satsuma in the exam – link together evidence.

How to use this guide

You may be given this at the start or at the end of teaching on the topic. Don't worry about being stuffed in your pocket (although don't take it into the exam itself!). Remember to use it when you want to. Scribble all over it, or highlight bits you need to look at again.

Here are some brief suggestions:

- Work through it as you go through the course.
- Give it a glance after the lessons.
- Give it a read before an upcoming test.
- Use it when you revise, of course – perhaps even outside the exam hall if you can!

Now write down the date of the exam. You can use this to plan your revision time.

Date of my exam:



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Checklist

It can be a useful idea to make a note of when you've read through something. If you know a topic, or you last looked at this six months ago, then it's probably

Topic	When did I read this? <i>Write the date in here – preferably today's</i>	I know
Coastal Landscapes and Processes		
Erosion Processes and Landforms		
Transport and Deposition – Processes and Landforms		
Subaerial Processes (Weathering, Mass Movement and Associated Landforms)		
Causes of Sea Level Change (Past, Present and Future)		
The Effects of Coastal Recession and Flooding – and Why It's a Problem		
Coastal Management		

Exam tips

Now that you've thoroughly revised and hopefully answered a few sample exam questions, you should have a good idea of what to expect in your exam.

Command words

In each question there are 'command words'. These are essentially the instructions to answer the question, and give you a clue on the type of response the examiner

Command words are not a secret, and they're nothing to worry about. You've probably seen them throughout your year(s) studying the course.

Edexcel has created a list of command words for you to refer to. They have also said which of them will occur and given the number of marks for each. They might not always be concerned if questions are slightly different in your exam. zzed.uk/9991-command-words

Here's our quick run-down of the different command words and what you need to give a balanced answer.

- ✓ **SUGGEST:** Give a reason or come up with something if asked.
- ✓ **COMPLETE, DRAW:** Use the data provided to complete missing values or draw a graph.
- ✓ **CALCULATE:** Do a mathematical analysis. You will be given marks for showing your working.
- ✓ **ANALYSE:** Identify the pros and cons or processes of EVERY view or opinion. Arguments or processes in a logical order, showing the relationships between them.
- ✓ **EXPLAIN:** Set out causes of the issue, event and/or factors influencing its form. Understanding and discussion of processes, may also require a graphical representation.
- ✓ **ASSESS:** Set out for and against or a relationship, and come to a conclusion. Weigh up the success or worth of between sides but pick out which is the most significant factor.
- ✓ **EVALUATE:** Consider several options or arguments and come to a conclusion. Weigh up the success or worth.

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Assessment objectives

You may come across the words 'assessment objectives', or 'AOs' for short. These are command words. They are set by the government and vary by subject. As you'd expect, AO1s are the easiest, AO2s are the hardest, and AO3s are the hardest.

Here's a quick summary:

	What you need to do	
AO1	Show your knowledge and understanding of geographical concepts and issues	✓ Collecting evidence together
AO2	Manipulate and draw conclusions from geographical information, both familiar and new	✓ Use of maps ✓ ICT skills: use of data ✓ Analysis, presentation
AO3	Investigate questions and reach conclusions through applying geographical skills and techniques	✓ Concluding ✓ Use of maps ✓ Statistics ✓ ICT skills: use of data ✓ Analysis, presentation

In your Paper 1 exam, you'll mostly be assessed on AO1 and AO2. There will be very few AO3 questions. Most of those in the NEA (fieldwork investigation).

For every question, Edexcel will have decided which AOs they are targeting. Bear this in mind when you answer. If it's clear that an answer is looking for some AO2 or AO3 marks, don't stop at AO1. Go through.

You might find it useful to have a look at a couple of mark schemes for the topic the examiner wants you to answer the questions.

Level marking

Now that you've got a handle on how the command words work and what the assessment objectives are, you need to be aware of how they will mark your answers.

For anything but the shortest of questions, you will be level marked. Each level has a range of marks. L1 = 1–3 marks, L2 = 4–6 marks. The essay-based questions will have four levels. The more marks you'll get.

An example of level marking criteria can be found overleaf.

Up to 3 marks can be awarded for AO1. A further 9 marks can be awarded for AO2. If only AO1 content is provided, allow 1 mark for Level 1 answers, 2 marks for Level 2 answers, 3 marks for Level 3 answers.

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Level	Mark	Descriptor
Level 1	1–4 marks	AO1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The student shows basic comprehension and only limited incorrect and not in line with the context of the question.
		AO2: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The student addresses a narrow range of ideas, and detailed inferences and links made. Limited explanation is present. Ideas are poorly supported, and may be one-sided. Discussion does not follow. No judgement and/or concluding remarks.
Level 2	5–8 marks	AO1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The student shows comprehension and some factual recall and generally in line with the context of the question.
		AO2: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The student addresses a range of ideas, to a reasonable extent, and links made. Some explanation is present. Ideas are supported, but may still be one-sided. Discussion follows. Some judgement and/or concluding remarks.
Level 3	9–12 marks	AO1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The student shows good comprehension and factual recall, tailored to the context of the question.
		AO2: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The student addresses a wide range of detailed ideas, with detailed inferences and links made. Good explanation is present. Ideas are often supported, with both sides supported. Discussion follows. Good judgement and/or concluding remarks.

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Coastal Landscapes and

Key words

- ✓ **Littoral zone:** Coastal area submerged by tides and the sea near to the coast.
- ✓ **Offshore:** The zone furthest from the shore. Waves no longer impact on the shore.
- ✓ **Inshore:** Submerged area between the shore and offshore area.
- ✓ **Foreshore:** Area of the shore between the high and low tide marks – the area between the high and low tide marks.
- ✓ **Backshore:** The zone furthest from the sea, entirely landward of the high-water mark. Only affected by waves under storm conditions.
- ✓ **High-energy coastline:** Areas of shore where there is more erosion than deposition, forming headlands because the waves are large with high erosive power.
- ✓ **Low-energy coastline:** Areas of shore where there is more deposition than erosion, forming bays because the waves are small with low erosive power.
- ✓ **Unconsolidated material:** Loose deposits which have not yet been cemented together. For example, boulders.
- ✓ **Sedimentary rock:** Layers of stone created by the deposition of material, e.g. sand and silt, therefore susceptible to erosion.
- ✓ **Metamorphic rock:** Sedimentary rock which has been altered by heat, from intrusions of magma, making the rocks harder than before.
- ✓ **Igneous rock:** Stone created by a volcano, usually very hard and resistant to erosion.
- ✓ **Rock joint:** A fracture within stone, allowing erosion to occur at a faster rate.
- ✓ **Permeable rock:** Stone with lots of connected pore spaces, allowing the movement of water through it.
- ✓ **Bedding plane:** Boundary between each layer of sedimentary rock.
- ✓ **Stratum:** A layer of sedimentary rock, different to the layers either side (separated by either side).
- ✓ **Folding:** Crumpling of strata due to tectonic processes.
- ✓ **Micro-features:** Small-scale modification to a coastal environment, such as a cave.
- ✓ **Concordant coastline:** A region of the coast where alternating bands of hard and soft rock are parallel to the coast.
- ✓ **Discordant coastline:** Coast section where alternating bands of hard rock and soft rock are at near right angles.
- ✓ **Dalmatian coast:** Islands remaining above water level from aligned valleys, as sea level rose.
- ✓ **Haff coast:** Concordant coastline formed of parallel spits and lagoons, found in the Netherlands.
- ✓ **Sand dune:** A depositional feature in which sand, blown from a beach by onshore winds, is mounded and stabilised by plants (e.g. marram grass).
- ✓ **Psammosere:** Development of a sand-dune ecosystem from bare sand to the formation of a mature woodland.
- ✓ **Pioneer species:** The first life to colonise a bare surface, such as algae on a rock.
- ✓ **Succession:** The process where different species take over an area of land over time, starting with pioneer species, and ending with the climatic climax vegetation.
- ✓ **Climatic climax vegetation:** The final stage of succession, e.g. broadleaved deciduous forest.
- ✓ **Mudflat:** Area of fine silt, often exposed at low tide and with very little surface vegetation.
- ✓ **Salt marsh:** Estuarine ecosystem dominated by salt-tolerant plants which cause mud to be deposited, eventually becoming dry land.
- ✓ **Halophyte:** A plant which can survive in very salty conditions, such as on a salt marsh. It can grow in the day, or is subject to salt spray, such as growing on a cliff.

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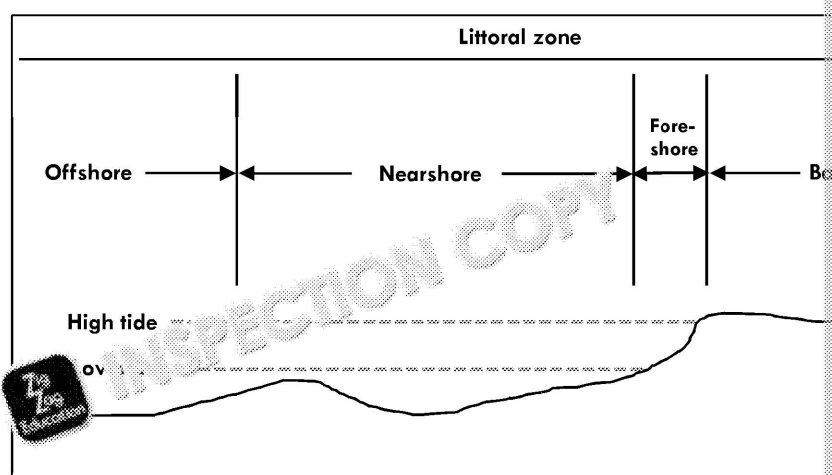


Key points

- We call the beach, shore and coastal sea the littoral zone. We divide this into the backshore, foreshore, nearshore and offshore.
- We can classify the coast based on many factors such as geology, sea level, and currents.
- High-energy coasts are often rocky, erosive landscapes with powerful, destructive waves, sometimes a long fetch. They often have resistant geology.
- Low-energy coasts include sandy beaches and estuaries. They have constructive waves and achieve dynamic equilibrium. Material is gained from the land, and from marine sources.
- Geology and energy combine to create classic coastal landscapes of erosion and deposition.
- Coasts erode faster when the rock is softer, has lots of cracks or weaknesses, or is made of loose, unconsolidated material. Some rocks are also more susceptible to weathering. Permeable rocks may erode faster.
- Rock dip and whether the coast is concordant or discordant also play a key role in the features that are seen, and the rate of erosion. Special types of concordant coastline are Haff coasts.
- Dunes are deposits of windblown sand which form an ecosystem. They develop over time, and as species move in, a process called succession.
- Mudflats are large expanses of river sediment at the river's mouth, exposed at low tide. They lose their load when reaching the sea. They have very little vegetation growth.
- Mudflats can eventually support plants, another sequence of succession to form a salt marsh. As the ecosystem develops, the marsh rises and becomes drier. Salt-tolerant plants, shrubs and trees eventually form a climatic climax vegetation.

The Littoral Zone

- Another name for the beach and start of the sea is the **littoral zone**. We divide this into sections based on distance from the coast, effects of currents, and how often each area is submerged.
- The four sections are:
 - offshore – out to sea, further out than the nearshore.
 - nearshore (inshore) (affected by currents between low water and beyond the beach)
 - foreshore (usual tidal range – also forms the 'shoreline').
 - backshore (only affected by waves during storms or spring tides, which are beyond the beach)
- Beyond the beach is the 'coast'.



Classifying the Coast

We can classify the coast in a number of ways, including...

- geology and features (e.g. cliffs or sand) – influenced by local geology
- changing sea level and land level (eustatic, e.g. submergent coastlines, isostatic)
- inputs from rivers (deposits of sand)
- waves, tides and currents.

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Low-energy and High-energy Coasts

A common way to classify coasts based on their 'energy'.

Rocky Coasts = High Energy

Lots of erosional features and material transport caused by:

- powerful, destructive waves
- onshore wind (prevailing) and waves
- may have a long fetch
- dynamic coasts
- often resistant geology (sometimes have tall cliffs)



E.g. Cornwall



Sandy Coasts and Low Energy

Lots of deposition

- low, constructive waves
- more depositional features like beaches, mudflats, salt marshes, and tall cliffs – but they are often eroded
- likely to deposit sediment from the coast
- e.g. sheltered bays and estuaries



E.g. South coast

- Beaches are said to be 'swash-aligned', or 'drift-aligned', depending on whether they are front-on, or at an angle.

Look at the two aerial photos of the coasts. What can we infer about the coast in the first photo?

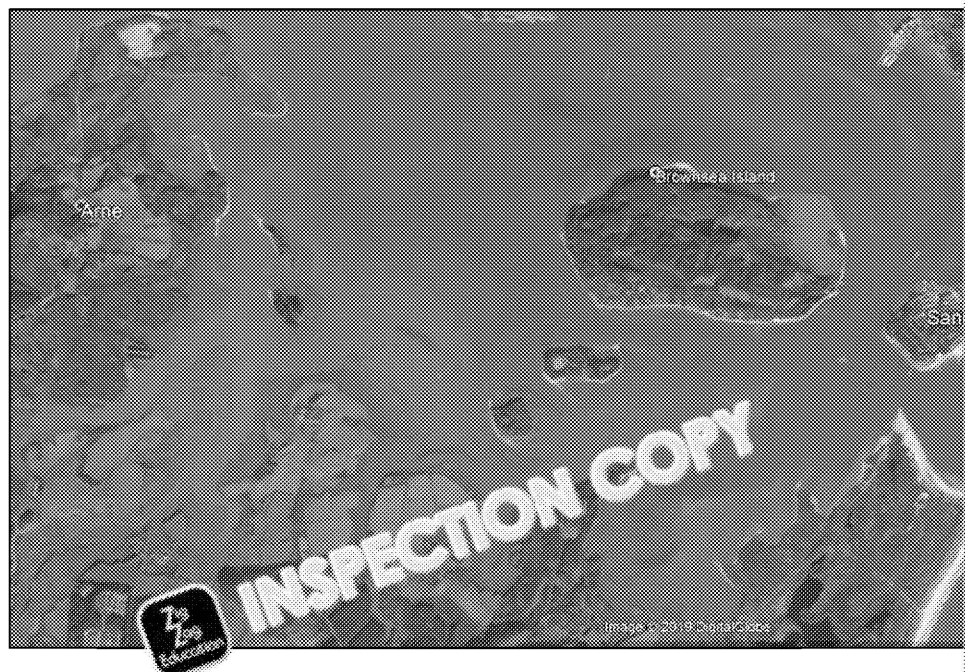


- This is a high-energy coastline. Waves are breaking on the rocks.
- It's also a rocky coastline. No tall cliffs.
- There are no low-lying areas – the ones that exist are rocky – the waves break directly on the rocks.
- At low tide, there may be wave-cut platforms.

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- Here is a low-energy coastline.
- To the left is an estuary at the mouth of a river – there is significant deposition and marshes visible.
- To the right are sandy beaches, low coastal plain.
- There is evidence of depositional processes including longshore drift, evidence of deposition.

Geology

Geology is very important in influencing coastal features.

Coastlines are often complex – many of the features noted below are shown in a small area. Some of these form **micro-features** such as caves. For example:

- The **rock type** affects the rate of erosion – the softer the rock, the faster it can erode.
 - The softest 'rocks' are **unconsolidated material** such as sand and boulder clay.
 - **Sedimentary** rocks are made of compressed deposits. They form in layers as they were laid down at different times.
 - The hardest rocks are **igneous** rocks – they are volcanic.
 - **Metamorphic** rocks are in between – they were formed by increased pressure and temperature of volcanic activity.
 - Some rocks such as limestone are susceptible to chemical weathering.
 - Some rocks are **permeable**, meaning that they can absorb water – the groundwater has passed through them and may have high **pore water** pressure.
- **Rock joints** – **bedding planes** and **strata** – weaknesses that can be eroded. Rock faces and strata are layers of rock laid down at different times. The layers are bedding planes.
- **Folding** – immense geological pressure over time crumples rocks so that they are no longer horizontal. This causes rock dip.
- **Dip** of the rock – whether the strata are horizontal, or dip towards the sea or inland. The photo above dip towards the sea. Dip affects the way that cliffs collapse.

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Geology is complicated – just look at any geology map. The UK is made up of different geological regions, it's why coastlines are also complicated – causing differential erosion. Rock types, angles, and form very different sequences.

- The types of features are also partially dependent on whether the coastline is

Concordant coasts

Bands of rock run parallel to the coast. Form coves where areas of weakness are exploited and the sea breaks through the hard layer into the softer layer behind.



E.g.

Lulworth Cove, Dorset

Dissimilar coasts

Bands of rock run parallel to the coast. Headlands and bays form where the sea breaks through the resistant rock, while



E.g.

Swanage and Dorset

- Two other types of concordant coastline also form Dalmatian and Haff coasts

Dalmatian coasts

Rock folding caused valleys to form parallel to the coast. These were deepened by river erosion, but have been flooded by sea-level rise in interglacial periods to form long, wide 'sounds'.



E.g.

They are named after the Dalmatian coast in Croatia.

Haff coasts

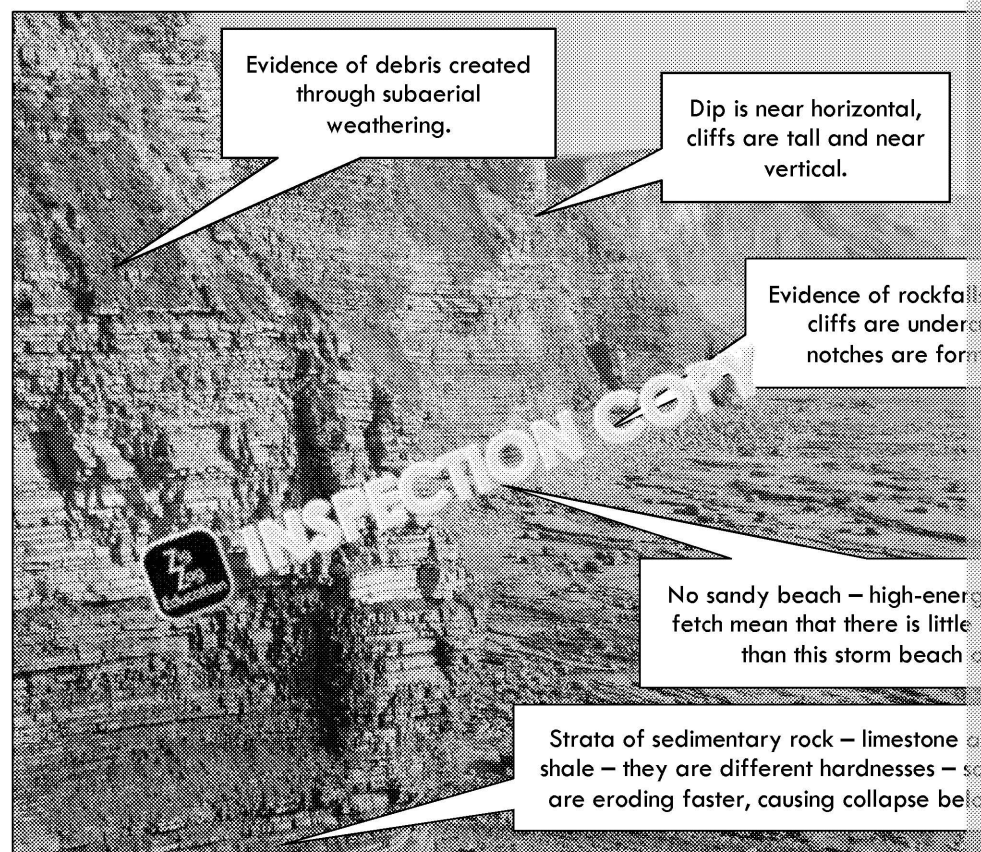
Shingle bars of unconsolidated sand and gravel worked by rivers are exposed at low tide and have deepened in interglacial periods to form long, wide 'sounds'.



E.g.

South

How has geology and location affected this landscape?



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Complex Cliffs and Landscapes

- Coasts are very complex, often dynamic places. There are many drivers and can often be seen at once.
- Processes such as erosion and deposition occur at the same time, and there can be deposition without erosion first occurring.



There's a lot going on in this photo:

- 🌊 inputs – waves and wind
- 🌊 processes – erosion and mass movement – we can see a large crack in the cliff on the stacks because of the different rock strata
- 🌊 transport – suspended load
- 🌊 stores – e.g. the beach in front of the cliff
- 🌊 outputs – sand and sediment from the cliffs

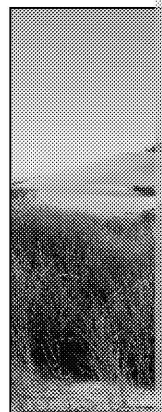
The Role of Vegetation in Stabilising Depositional Features

The roots of plants help to stabilise depositional features such as dunes and make them less susceptible to erosion. Over time, different stages of succession occur, where one stage leads to another. They occur in sandy coastal plains and estuarine environments.

Here are some common examples

Sand Dunes

- 🌿 Sand dunes are mounds of sand at the boundary of the land.
- 🌿 They develop behind sandy beaches where there are prevailing onshore winds – they obviously need a lot of sand available!
- 🌿 Wide beaches mean that the sand can dry out between high tides – where it is easily entrained by the wind. A large tidal range helps!

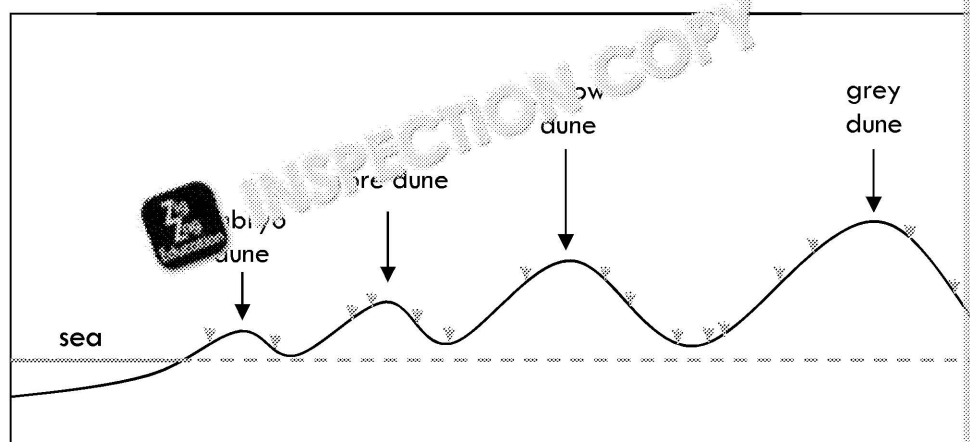


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- Sand is deposited when friction increases – for example around obstacles and around marram grass growing on the dune.
- As dunes develop, the accumulated sand increases their height.
- The development of a sand-dune ecosystem is called a **psammosere**. At each stage, different plants – starting with the **pioneer species**, and ending with the **climatic climax** plants and trees.
- Each stage helps the next one develop, by further stabilising the dunes, creating better conditions, and adding organic material to the soil.

The stages of dune development are shown on the diagram below. The youngest dune is closest to the sea.

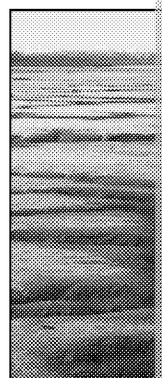


E.g.

Sefton Coast (Merseyside), Drigg Dunes (Cumbria), Freshwater Wetlands (Wales), Kenfig (Port Talbot).

Mudflats

- Mudflats are expanses of bare mud, which are underwater at high tide.
- They are found at the mouths of rivers – estuaries. Rivers carry the very fine sediment, which is deposited when the water meets the incoming tides. The saltwater also causes flocculation – particles clump together so need more energy to keep in suspension.
- There is little to no vegetation growing on mudflats, but many birds rely on the abundant source of shellfish and worms that live within the mud.
- In the summer, algae can grow on the mud.
- Mudflats can turn into salt marshes.



E.g.

Wadden Sea, Netherlands.

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Salt Marshes

- In the same way as sand dunes, a series of succession can develop a mudflat into a salt marsh.
- Salt marshes are also found in the lee of spits.
- Plants that live on salt marshes have to cope with the salt. They're called '**halophytes**'.
- The pioneer species might be eelgrass; later, spartina and glasswort colonise the marsh.
- These species trap more sediment, and the marsh rises.
- This means that they are submerged for shorter periods each day.
- A meadow of plants can then take hold.
- The climatic climax may be woody shrub and eventually trees.



E.g.

Newtown, Loughlight (pictured), Crymlyn Burrows (South Wales)



If you only remember these three things



- 1 The coast and a portion of the sea are called the **littoral zone**. Beaches based on their energy – high-energy coast and low-energy coasts have many depositional features such as beaches as well as estuaries.
- 2 Geology is key to shaping coastal landscapes, along with climate and sea level change. Rock type, dip and whether the coasts are eroding or accreting affect the features, which are eroded by the full range of coastal erosion and subaerial processes.
- 3 Sand dunes and salt marshes both show the process of **primary succession**. Over time, they are colonised by pioneer species. The pioneer community further builds the height of the feature by trapping sediment and improving the growing conditions for the future climax vegetation starts to grow.



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Activities

Consolidation questions

- Which is missing from this sequence?
Offshore, _____, foreshore, backshore
.....
.....
- Give **two** characteristics of high-energy coastlines.
.....
.....
- Which type of material erodes fastest?
.....
.....
- Why do jointed rocks increase erosion potential?
.....
.....
- Why does rock 'dip' affect coastal erosion?
.....
.....
- Which type of coast is **less** likely to develop headlands?
.....
.....
- Why does marram grass help to build up the height of a dune?
.....
.....
- How are mudflats related to salt marshes?
.....
.....

Take it further

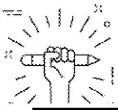
Use the geology map to explain the shape of an area of coastline that you know; for example, concordant or discordant, types of rock such as sedimentary or igneous. You might be able to find photos to help you – for example, show the shape of the cliffs and other features within the cliffs.

[zzed.uk/9991-map-geology](http://www.zigzagged.uk/9991-map-geology)





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Student checks

Topic	What Do I Know?	No Idea 	Nearly 	Sure 	
 Coastal Landscapes and Processes	The littoral zone				
	High-energy and low-energy coasts				
	The role of geology in coastal landforms and erosion rates				
	Sand dunes				
	Mudflats and salt marshes				

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Erosion Processes and Landforms

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Key words

- ✓ **Current:** Flow of water around a coastline.
- ✓ **Fetch:** Distance over water that the wind blows – the greater the distance, the the waves have, and coastal erosion speeds increase.
- ✓ **Prevailing wind:** The direction the wind blows from the majority of the time.
- ✓ **Constructive wave:** Low and flat wave frequently associated with swells that have long wavelengths (10–20 m), and low frequencies (6–8 per minute), building up beaches.
- ✓ **Destructive wave:** Wave frequently associated with storm conditions that have short wavelengths (12–14 per minute), diminishing beach width.
- ✓ **Wave refraction:** Curving of the wave as shallow water is reached, such as at a bay.
- ✓ **Swash:** Uprush of water on to a beach caused by incoming waves.
- ✓ **Backwash:** Return of water towards the sea immediately after the swash.
- ✓ **Tidal range:** The vertical distance between high and low water experienced.
- ✓ **Spring tide:** The tide with the greatest range, occurs when there is a full or new moon.
- ✓ **Neap tide:** The tide with the lowest range, a week after the spring tide when the sun and moon are at right angles.
- ✓ **Storm beach:** Deposit of the coarsest material thrown to the back of the beach.
- ✓ **Offshore bar:** Ridge of deposited material out at sea. Sometimes exposed at high tide in front of the shore. There may be a lagoon, too.
- ✓ **Berm:** Ridge on the beach created by waves.
- ✓ **Cusp:** Semicircular feature on the beach.
- ✓ **Ripples:** Pattern seen on the beach at low tide caused by the action of waves.
- ✓ **Runnels:** Long hollows in the sand that run parallel to the coast.
- ✓ **Intertidal zone:** The foreshore – the area between the limits of high and low tide.
- ✓ **Erosion:** The transport away of weathered material, such as by water (waves).
- ✓ **Hydraulic action:** Water compresses air in gaps in a rock face, creating high pressure that can cause rocks to break apart when repeated.
- ✓ **Corrasion (abrasion):** Pebbles transported in the sea grind against, and are responsible for, erosion.
- ✓ **Solution (erosion process):** Rocks containing calcium carbonate (limestone) are dissolved by acids within the sea water.
- ✓ **Attrition:** Rocks transported in the sea are slowly worn down into smaller, smoother pebbles as they are swirled around.
- ✓ **Cliffs:** Rock back wall to a beach created by the erosion of the land.
- ✓ **Shore (wave-cut) platform:** Rocky ledge caused by the retreat of a cliff further back.
- ✓ **Headland:** Resistant outcrop of rock, often along a discordant coastline, with wave refraction.
- ✓ **Bay:** A body of water surrounded by land on three sides (often two headlands and a baymouth) and less resistant rock along a coastline.
- ✓ **Cove:** Bay with a narrow opening in a concordant coastline where erosion occurred behind.
- ✓ **Geo:** A vertical hollow in a rock face created by the enlargement of a crack.
- ✓ **Cave:** A natural hollow with a roof formed by the continual erosion of a crack.
- ✓ **Arch:** A continuous hollow in a headland, formed by the backward erosion of the overhanging rock until it collapses.
- ✓ **Stack:** Isolated column of resistant rock formed by the erosion and collapse of a headland.
- ✓ **Stump:** Eroded remnant (base) of a stack, left behind after the rock above has collapsed.

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Key points

- Wave strength depends on the fetch, wind speed and the duration/direction.
- Waves can be constructive or destructive – building up or eroding beaches.
- Tides occur because of the gravitational pull of the Moon (and Sun) – tides vary throughout the month.
- Beaches change throughout days, weeks and years – tides and currents regularly move the sand. Winter storms can erode the lower beach and also create storm beaches.
- Beaches contain lots of small erosional and depositional features such as berms.
- The sea and its waves erode the coast through a number of processes such as abrasion. The sediment is worn down by attrition. Factors such as wave type and power affect the erosion potential.
- Cliffs are the boundary between the sea and the land – some are tall and tend to slump towards the sea.
- Cliffs often collapse due to undercutting – the formation of wave-cut notches.
- Retreating cliffs form a wide, flat beach or platform.
- On discordance, headlands and bays develop.
- Geopline waves can develop through a headland to create an arch. The arch eventually collapses and the stack topples, a stump occurs.

Waves and Their Formation

Wind affects coastal environments, mainly because the wind blows across the ocean surface to form **waves**.

- Waves form in the open sea where they are circular motions of water.
- When they reach the shore (shallow water), they slow down because of friction. They therefore 'fall over' – it's called breaking – the waves spill or plunge down onto the shore.

Wind also causes erosion and transport in coastal environments, by entraining particles of sand and shingle.

There are several factors which affect the size of the wave:

Fetch

The amount of ocean that the wind has blown across – the larger the fetch, the larger the wave.

Strength

The greater the pressure gradient, the greater the wind speed and, therefore, the larger the winds.

Types of Wave

Waves can be classified as **constructive** and **destructive**.

Constructive

- Build up beaches as the wind speed is greater than the backwash.
- Waves are gentle and spill onto the beach.
- Can create a **berm**.
- Can help form beaches on an incoming tide.
- Have a lower frequency*.

- Large, powerful waves that erode material.
- Waves plunge down the beach.
- The strong backwash erodes the beach.
- Can erode the beach.
- Have a higher frequency*.

* Frequency is the number of waves in a period of time – such as one minute.

Wave refraction causes differential erosion from the way that waves bend around headlands.

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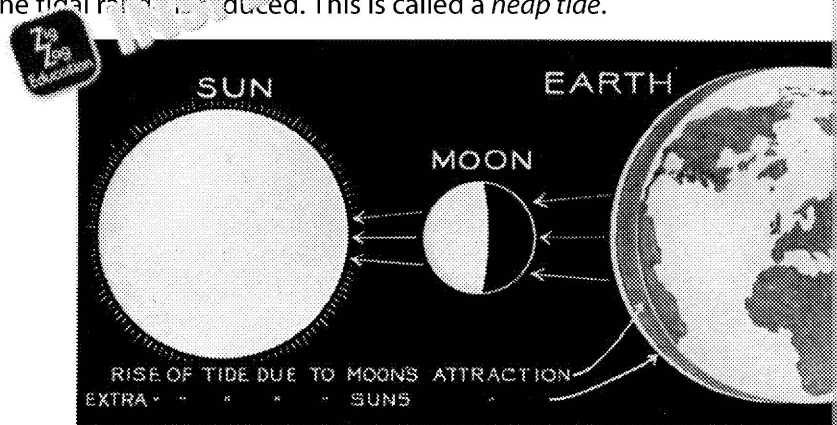
Other Influences on the Coasts

Currents are the movement of water and they can transport suspended material. **longshore drift** – moving sediment along a coastline. Offshore currents are called **longshore currents** and they move water and material out to sea.

Tides

Tides are the rise and fall of water level at the coast, mainly due to the gravitational pull of the Moon, to a lesser extent the Sun (because the Sun is further away). The pull creates a bulge on the side of the Earth facing the Moon, and on the other side, too. This is the *high tide*. At 90°, *low tide* occurs.

- There are usually two high and two low tides each day.
- The **tidal range** (difference between heights of the high and low tides) changes based on the alignment of the Sun and Moon.
 - When the Sun, Earth and Moon align (as in the diagram), there is a large tidal range because the gravitational pulls combine.
 - When the moon does not align (at right angles), the pulls of the Moon and Sun are at right angles and the tidal range is reduced. This is called a *neap tide*.



While there is variation in tidal ranges because of spring and neap tides, coastlines have their typical tidal ranges.



The tidal range can influence erosion – whether a large width of shoreline is exposed (a **wide beach zone**), or whether just a small area is constantly exposed.

Coastal flooding can be caused by storm surges – onshore winds, and low pressure can combine at high tide to suck up the water and push it onto the land.

Changes to the Coast Throughout the Year

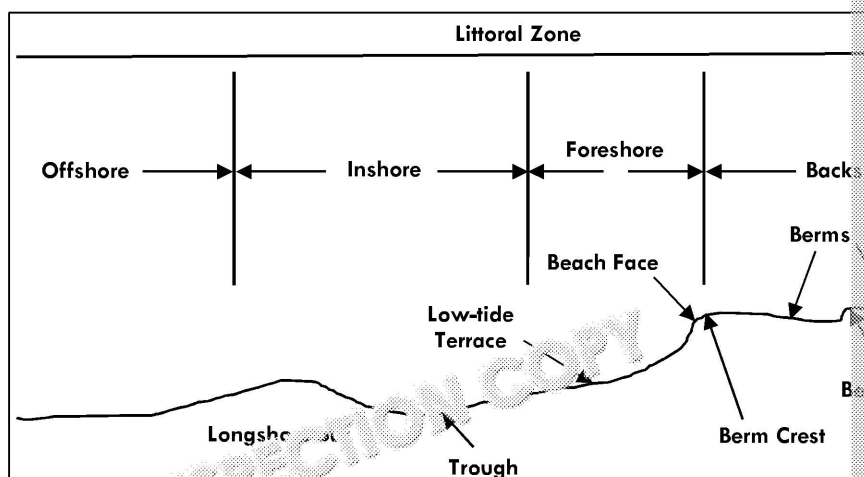
The shape (morphology) of a beach may change throughout the year.

- In the summer, the height of the beach may be built up by constructive waves. **berms** may form on the beach.
- During the winter, the beach's steepness will increase as the berms are eroded by destructive waves.
- **Storm beaches** develop during high-energy events where powerful storm waves deposit larger material towards the cliffs in the backshore.
- **Offshore bars** develop when storms erode material from the beach and deposit it offshore.

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- While beaches might seem simple, are plenty of smaller features created through depositional processes.



- Berms** are ridges built up by each lower tide (as range decreases towards the equator).
- Cusps** are erosional circular depressions.
- Near the low-water mark, **ripples** occur from currents and waves.
- Runnels** are channels parallel to the shore which channel water, separated by low ridges.

On a shorter timescale, the beach may change with successive tides – e.g. over a tidal range decreases towards a neap tide, a succession of berms may develop over a high tide.

On a longer timescale, the beach may change, for example as a result of human engineering, if a river is dammed which prevents sediment transport to the coast, sea-level change and climate change.

Erosion

Hydraulic action:

Waves force air and water into pores in the cliffs, increasing the pressure within.

Corrosion

Waves pick up pebbles and use them to erode the cliff, or scrape material from the wave-cut platform.

Attrition:

Eroded material is reduced in size, and becomes more rounded as the material swirls together, knocking off the edges.

Solifluction

Some rocks can be moved by the sea.

Waves cause erosion of cliffs and beach material by removing them away. There are three main types of erosion:

Each of these is influenced by waves, their power, size, destructiveness, tides, and the geology of the area.

For example:

- The more powerful the waves, the harder the water is forced into cracks, and the more erosion.
- The higher the tide, the more cliff that is exposed to the water.
- The softer the geology or the more cracks, the greater the erosion potential and susceptibility to solution.

Erosional Landforms

Overleaf are the distinctive landforms created through the erosional processes in coastal areas.

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Wave-cut Notches

- The main driver of cliff collapse and retreat.
- The base of the cliff is eroded by hydraulic action and abrasion, causing a groove to develop.
- Over time, this groove cuts deeper into the cliff.
- Eventually, the cliff is so unsupported that the face collapses.
- The collapsed material is worn down by attrition and transported away, allowing a fresh cliff surface for erosion and leading to the development of a wave-cut platform.



E.g.

Anywhere there are cliffs being eroded!



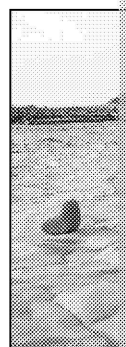
Wave-cut Platform

- As cliffs retreat, and the eroding material is transported away, a shallow-sloping area of rock develops.
- They slope gently towards the sea.
- Some are smooth, where they are worn down by abrasion.
- Others are rougher and are filled with rock pools.



E.g.

Lyme Regis, Glamorgan Heritage Coast (south Wales).



Cliffs

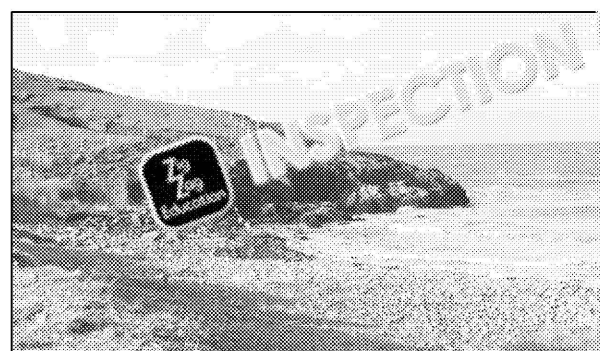
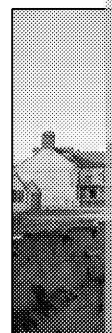
Cliffs often form the boundary between the land and the sea. They are influenced by geology and the energy of the coastline.

- Resistant rock types often form steep cliffs.
- Soft and unconsolidated material may gently slope towards the sea.
- Unconsolidated rocks will erode fastest, even in a relatively low-energy coastline.
- Hydraulic action and corrosion can form a notch at the base of the cliff – the overhang later collapses.
- On some softer geology with a low fetch, mass movement will create a barrier at the foot of the cliffs, helping to protect them.



E.g.

Rapidly eroding coastlines: Norfolk – Happisburgh is shown in the image. Tall, hard cliffs: Conachair, St Kilda – up to 426 metres!



Headlands and Bays

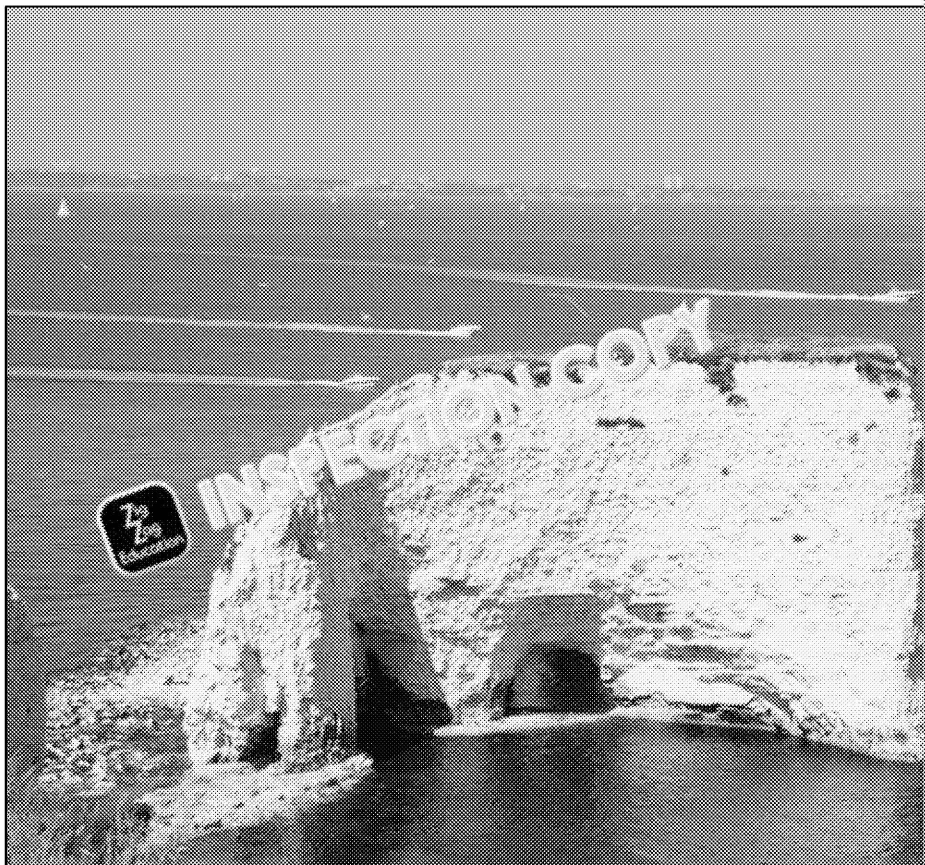
- Headlands are prominent points of land that extend outwards into the sea.
- They often form on discordance or softer rock either side of a bay.
- Material is deposited in the bay.
- Wave refraction is a factor in the formation of headlands and bays, with wave power and helping to erode the headlands.

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Headland → Geo → Cave → Arch → Stack → Stump

Here's the Old Harry Rocks. This probably isn't the first time you've seen them!

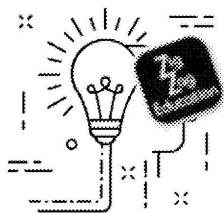


So, how did they form, and how will they evolve?

1. This sequence started with a chalk headland.
2. Hydraulic action, for example, exploited a weakness in the rock to form a **cave**.
3. Further erosion opened up the geo into a larger **cave**.
4. If a cave on the other side opens up, or the single cave extends all the way through, an **arch** is formed.
5. Eventually the arch collapses to form a pillar of rock called a **stack**.
6. The stack is eroded through corrasion and hydraulic action at its base. Eventually it becomes a **stump**.
7. Abrasion will erode down the remaining rock to form a **stump**.
8. Eventually the remains will become part of a **wave-cut platform**.

The rock is also being affected by subaerial weathering, which reduces its height.

If you only remember these three things



1. The waves are affected by the wind and fetch, and by the Moon (mainly); the tidal range influences how much material is eroded.
2. The waves and currents cause different forms of erosion, eroding material away.
3. The coast is lined by cliffs, which can either be tall and steep or slump towards the sea. When cliffs retreat, wave-cut features form. Headlands can start the sequence of development, leading to stacks and stumps.

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Activities

Consolidation questions

1. What causes waves to 'break'?
.....
.....
2. What is 'fetch'?
.....
.....
3. If winds are **offshore**, do you think that the coastline will be high-energy or low-energy?
.....
4. Give one difference between a constructive wave and a destructive wave.
.....
.....
5. Which tide occurs when the Sun, Moon and Earth are **NOT** aligned?
.....
6. Give an example of a short-term change to a beach structure.
.....
.....
7. Which type of erosion: a. forces air and water into cracks; b. dissolves rocks and soil material?
.....
.....
8. Give a cause of cliff collapse.
.....
.....
9. Why do headlands and bays form on discordant coastlines?
.....
.....
10. Which is missing in this sequence?
Cave, _____, stack, stump
.....

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Take it further

Take a look at this interactive geology map and see how the rock types affect the shape of the coastline:
zzed.uk/9991-geology-map-uk



Student checks

Topic	What Do I Know?	No Idea ☹	Nearly ☺	Sure 😊	
Erosion Processes and Landforms	Wave formation				
	Types of wave				
	Tides				
	Beach structure and changes				
	Erosion processes				
	Wave-cut notches				
	Wave-cut platforms				
	Cliffs				
	Headlands and bays				
	Sequence from a headland to a stump				

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Transport and Deposition Processes and Landforms

Key words

- ✓ **Transport:** Movement of material around a coastline, for example in currents and wind.
- ✓ **Traction:** Large particles, such as pebbles, are rolled across the sea floor (or in the wind) because they are too heavy to be suspended.
- ✓ **Saltation:** Waves and currents bounce larger material across the sea bed (or insufficient energy available to constantly suspend the material).
- ✓ **Suspension:** Fine sediment requires very little energy for it to be maintained in air, therefore it will remain in the air for a long time.
- ✓ **Solution (transport):** Transport of dissolved material within the water.
- ✓ **Aeolian processes:** Relating to the wind, such as transport and erosion.
- ✓ **Longshore drift:** Sediment transport along the coast. Waves approach at an oblique angle up the beach. Backwash moves material towards the sea.
- ✓ **Deposition:** Process where material is dropped from suspension or movement as friction increases.
- ✓ **Gravity settling:** When the energy within the water or air decreases, material settles out of water because of gravity.
- ✓ **Flocculation:** When fresh river water meets saline water in estuaries, suspended particles clump together meaning that they become larger and need more energy for transport. If the energy decreases, deposition occurs.
- ✓ **Beach:** A band of material such as sand, pebbles and crushed shells deposited at the edge of the sea and land, mostly under water at high tide.
- ✓ **Spit:** Strip of deposited material connected to the land and out to sea caused by longshore drift in one direction or enters an estuary, but transport continues in the same direction.
- ✓ **Tomolo:** A spit that joins the mainland to a previously offshore island.
- ✓ **Offshore bar:** Ridge of deposited material out at sea. Sometimes exposed at low tide in front of the shore. There may be a lagoon, too.
- ✓ **Barrier beach:** Usually permanently exposed sand ridge out at sea, protecting the land from the sea that connected with land again.
- ✓ **Cuspate foreland:** Triangular protrusion formed from two merging spits. The material is exposed to longshore drift in two opposing directions.
- ✓ **Open system:** A cycle or process where inputs and outputs can add or remove material from a system.
- ✓ **Inputs:** Additions to a system.
- ✓ **Store:** Area where material resides for a period of time (residence time).
- ✓ **Flow:** Movement between stores.
- ✓ **Outputs:** Losses from a system.
- ✓ **Dynamic equilibrium:** The steady, balanced state of a system, where inputs and outputs are equal.
- ✓ **Positive feedback:** A 'runaway' system loop where the system moves further away from equilibrium.
- ✓ **Negative feedback:** Cycle where the effective elements, bringing the system back to equilibrium.
- ✓ **Sediment cell:** A self-contained section of coastline along which material is moved without impacting on neighbouring cells.
- ✓ **Sediment budget:** The difference between the inputs and outputs of material in a system, determining the balance of erosion and deposition.
- ✓ **Closed system:** System where energy can transfer across its boundary, but material cannot.

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Key points

- Coasts derive their sediment from the land, the cliffs, from offshore, from ocean biological sources.
- Material is then transported away by waves and currents and also by the wind. Processes include traction, saltation, suspension and solution.
- The process of longshore drift transports material along the coast.
- Material is deposited when the energy is lost, or when it clumps together.
- Beaches are large deposits of sand, shingle or pebbles. They form in low-energy areas and are built up by constructive waves in the summer. Waves sort the material, with the largest at the back – sometimes a ridge of pebbles called a storm beach.
- Spits are ridges of deposits out to sea and occur where the coastline changes, e.g. at the mouth of an estuary, but the flow of sediment continues down the coast. Spits can be straight or curved and can form across a bay.
- Offshore bars are ridges of material (silt or sand) across a bay (that might be submerged at low tide) like spits, or are glacial moraines pushed towards the shore.
- Barrier beaches are like bars, but are certainly above the water level, and are separated by holes or gaps in the beaches, then they appear to be a series of islands.
- Tombolos are ridges of deposits that link an island to the mainland.
- Cuspate forelands are triangular wedges of material which occur when longshore drift works in opposite directions along the coast.
- Coasts are open systems, sediment cells are closed systems.
- Coasts have inputs, outputs, stores and processes.
- Coastal processes work towards dynamic equilibrium. Positive and negative feedback loops can restore the system to an equilibrium.
- Humans can alter or modify the equilibrium.
- On every coastline, there are many different processes that work together in a complex way, each other.
- There are 11 sediment cells in England and Wales, which are essentially closed systems.
- Sediment budgets depend on the inputs and outputs of material on a stretch of coast, which can be positive or negative.

Transportation

Coasts gain material from the land (e.g. rivers), from cliffs, from offshore and from other areas of the coast when transported from other areas of the coast (e.g. transported via longshore drift).

- Beaches are said to be 'swash-aligned', or 'drift-aligned', depending on whether the waves strike the beach front-on, or at an angle.
 - Drift-aligned beaches have waves at an angle, meaning that longshore drift is occurring.
 - Swash-aligned beaches don't have waves at an angle, so longshore drift is not occurring.

Once eroded material reaches, or is eroded into, the coastal zone, there are forces that move it along the coast and waves **transport** the material along the coast. The larger the particle, the more energy it takes to move it!

Wind and currents can also entrain and transport material.

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From **largest** to smallest material...

Traction:

Largest particles (rocks) are rolled along during storms. They're too large to ever be suspended.

Salutation:

Smaller pebbles or shingle 'bounce' along in stages – require powerful waves.

Suspension:

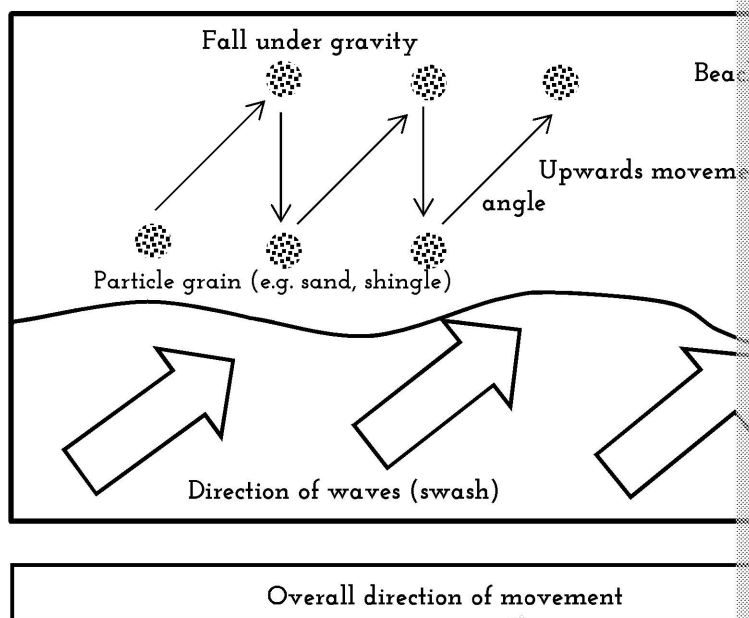
Small particles such as sand and silt are suspended within the water, making it look cloudy.

Solution:

Dissolved load (minerals) – essentially invisible.

Longshore Drift

One marine process is **longshore drift**. Waves meet the shore at an angle, pushing material then falls back downwards towards the sea. To stop longshore drift, give sediment.



Deposition

Deposition occurs when:

- ↓ The energy is reduced – e.g. wind speed drops.
- ↓ Friction is increased down the water or wind – such as rough ground surface.
- ↓ Flow becomes more turbulent.
- ↓ Load increases.

The largest particles are deposited first, as they require the most energy. This is because they fall out of suspension due to gravity.

Very small particles are deposited due to **flocculation** – particles combine, making larger clumps. This process occurs in estuaries where fresh and saline (salty) water meet.

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Transport and deposition combine to form the following landforms.

Beaches

- Beaches are large gently-sloping deposits of material in sheltered locations, ample supply of material, and by constructive waves.
- Beaches can rapidly change – a storm can erode and change the shape.
- They're made of sand, shingle and pebbles, often a combination.
- At the landward **backshore**, storms hurl the largest rocks into a ridge called a ridge.
- Beaches are stratified – the smallest material is exposed at low tide.
- The profile changes during the year, too – they are often steeper in summer due to constructive waves.

Spits

- **Spits** are protrusions of material that are deposited when the coastline changes direction, such as at the mouth of an estuary.
- The material is transported downstream via longshore drift, and continues into the deeper water, before deposition occurs due to increased turbulence.
- In an estuary, river flow stops the spit from growing across the whole channel.
- Spits can have a **curved** end, when the wind changes direction out to sea, or due to wave refraction.
- Behind the spit, where water is sheltered, deposition occurs and marshes can develop.
- There are several types of spit – including simple and recurved, and double spits.

Simple spits

Straight or with one hook.



E.g. Spurn Head, Sandbanks in Poole

Two dominant winds produce a recurved spit.



E.g. Christchurch Spit

Offshore Bars

Bars are ridges of material that extend across a bay (not an estuary), creating a lagoon behind.

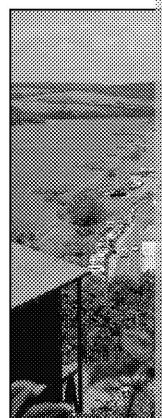
They are thought to be made in two ways:

1. Resulting from longshore drift – like a spit.
2. Accumulated glacial till transported towards the coast from the oceans (rising sea level after the last ice age).

Offshore bars may be (not always submerged, and protect the coast from the sea).



E.g. Hapton Ley, Devon (in the photo)
– the lagoon is on the left.



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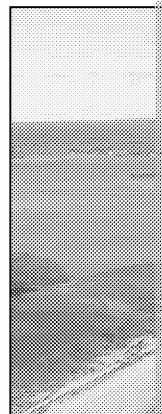
Barrier Beaches and Islands

Barrier beaches are ridges of material above the water level that protect the coast from erosion. Sometimes erosion erodes holes in the barrier, essentially creating a chain of islands.



E.g.

Extensive barrier beaches are found on the eastern coast of the United States. Have a look on satellite images to find them!



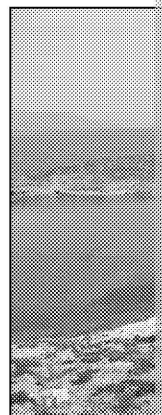
Tombolos

A ridge of deposited strip of material that connects an island with the mainland. The waves have less energy due to the shelter of the island, being closer to the shore. This allows material to be deposited.



E.g.

St Ninian's Isle, Scotland; Howth Head, Ireland, Crummock Water – an inland lake!



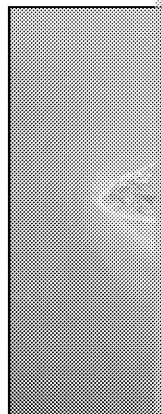
Cusate Forelands

Longshore drift occurs in opposite directions to create a wedge of land. The example in Dungeness is thought to have been created from glacial material transported via longshore drift, while powerful storms deposited material in protective ridges.



E.g.

Dungeness, Kent.



Note that, as we saw in the last chapter (dunes and marshes), vegetation can be a key coastal feature. Over time, plant succession occurs.

The Natural Coastal System

We can break down coasts into natural systems.

Coasts are natural systems because they have inputs and outputs of matter and energy.

Most material entering coasts is from outside – rivers.

Coastal systems are driven by energy. They have:

- Inputs
- Stores and components
- Flows
- Processes

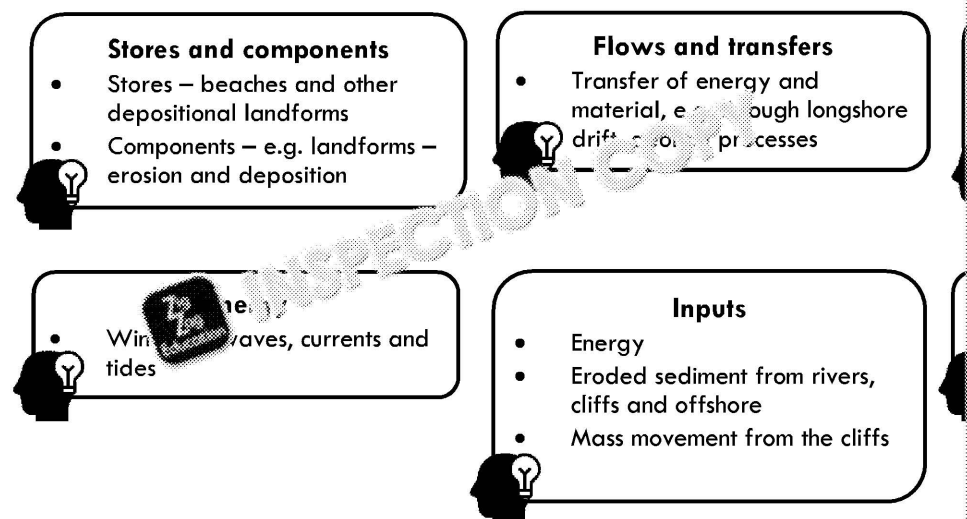
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○ Outputs



Here are some examples:



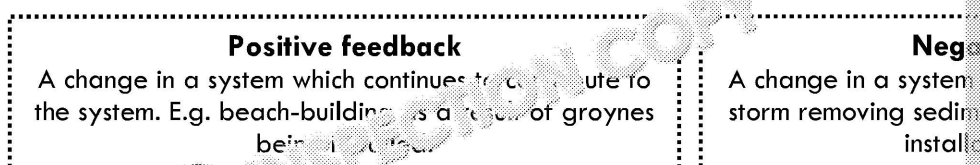
Note that some things can be in more than one box – for example longshore drift out of a system, or features can be stores and landforms – such as a beach.

You may hear the terms 'sources' and 'sinks'.

- Sources are areas where material is generated from, e.g. inputs and stores.
- Sinks are the stores – e.g. depositional features.
- As noted above, they can sometimes be the same features.

Dynamic Equilibrium

- Coasts are usually in a state of **dynamic equilibrium**. Their inputs and outputs are balanced.
- If this is the case, then there is little change.
- Some coasts are not in equilibrium. They are subject to **positive** and **negative** feedback cycles.
- These feedback cycles will result in a new equilibrium.
- Human activity, such as coastal engineering, can change the state of equilibrium to positive and negative.



Sediment Sources, Cells and Budgets

Sediment cells are **closed systems** because headlands and areas of deep water prevent sediment moving from one cell to another.

We can apply the concept of a **sediment budget** to an area of coastline, or by measuring the inputs and outputs, we can work out whether a beach will grow or shrink in depth depending on whether the inputs are larger or smaller than the outputs.

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Coasts receive sediment from a number of sources:

<p>Rivers: Fine sediment from eroded rock inland – a major source.</p>	<p>Cliffs: Mass movement, rockfall, cliffs on to the sea.</p>
<p>Offshore and the seabed: During storms, powerful waves stir up the seabed.</p>	<p>Ocean currents: Upwelling of material from the seabed.</p>
<p>Biological sources: Form sands of broken-up shells and coral.</p>	

We can divide coastlines up into **coastal cells** or **closed systems**, where material cycles, but can't escape. There are 11 **sediment cells** (**littoral cells**) in England and Wales. They are separated by headlands, bays and deep water. Each can be divided into smaller sub-cells.

The map to the right shows the 11 sediment cells, separated by the dotted lines. The circles show the boundaries between the sub-cells.

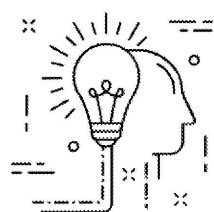
The **sediment budget** is the difference between the amount of material added and removed from a stretch of coastline. We must know every source and sink of material, so they are often estimates.

The budget is controlled by erosion and transport:

- Positive budgets occur when erosion adds more material than is transported away, and beaches will build up.
- A negative budget occurs when there is little erosion or more transport away – beaches become thin and eroded.



If you only remember these five things



- 1 Material is transported by waves, currents and wind. The energy drops. Longshore drift is a process that moves material along the coast.
- 2 Beaches are probably the most well-known depositional features. They require upstream erosion and the deposition of local material. Shingle or pebbles are common during the summer. There are beach ridges, berms and cusps.
- 3 The formation of spits, tombolos and bars have similarities. They are narrow ridges of material out to sea, between the mainland and across a bay, respectively. Cuspate forelands are deposited material where longshore drift occurs.
- 4 Coasts are open systems – energy and material eventually reach dynamic equilibrium. Natural coasts are in a state of positive and negative feedback cycles – a new equilibrium is achieved.
- 5 We split the coast into independent sediment cells and calculate sediment budgets for a coastline.

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Activities

Consolidation questions

1. Which type of transport makes the sea appear cloudy?

.....

2. Why does friction cause deposition?

.....

.....

3. Why is material deposited in bays?

.....

.....

4. Some beaches are 'drift-aligned', what is the other type of beach?

.....

5. Give **two** features necessary for a spit to develop.

.....

.....

6. What does a tombolo connect to the mainland?

.....

7. Which depositional feature can protect the coast?

.....

8. Which type of feature is found at Dungeness?

.....

9. Give a source of material that enters the coastal environment.

.....

10. Give a source of energy in the coastal environment.

.....

11. How can a negative sediment budget influence a beach?

.....

.....

12. Why can coasts be described as 'dynamic'?

.....

.....

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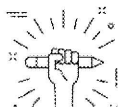


Take it further

Check out some of the videos here: zzed.uk/9991-coasts-videos

Take a look at the documents here: zzed.uk/9991-coastal-explorer which focus on the coastline where Spurn Head is located. How might the spit be affected by sea level rise?

Take a look at this page on the dynamic landscape at Birling Gap: zzed.uk/9991-nat-trust-birling



Student checks

Topic	What Do I Know?	No idea ☹️	Nearly 😐	Sure 😊	
Processes – Transportation and Deposition	Transportation				
	Longshore drift				
	Deposition				
Landscapes of Deposition	Beaches				
	Spits				
	Tomboles				
	Offshore bars				
	Barrier beaches and islands				
Coastal Cycles	The coastal system and parts of the cycle				
	Dynamic equilibrium, positive and negative feedback				
	Sediment cells and budgets				

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Subaerial Processes (Weathering, Mass Movement and Associated Landforms)

Key words

- ✓ **Physical (mechanical) weathering:** The in-situ breakdown of rocks by the action of changes in moisture and, frost, differential temperature, etc.
- ✓ **Chemical weathering:** The in-situ breakdown of rock resulting from the action of chemicals contained within seawater.
- ✓ **Biological weathering:** The in-situ breakdown of rock resulting from the action of plant growth and burrowing creatures.
- ✓ **Mass movement:** The downslope transport of soil, bedrock, rock debris or material by the influence of waves.
- ✓ **Blockfall:** Tumble of rocks from a cliff, rapidly under gravity.
- ✓ **Rotational slump:** As material slides downslope, there is a curved, upwards movement.
- ✓ **Landslides:** Changing run-off and ground disturbance can cause unconsolidated material to flow downhill under gravity.
- ✓ **Talus (scree) slope:** Accumulation of fallen rock debris at the base of a cliff, resulting from weathering.
- ✓ **Terraced cliff profile:** Sequence of beaches and cliffs stepping back at different levels, caused by ice ages, isostatic and tectonic activity.

Key points

- Weathering affects the cliffs and can be physical, chemical and biological.
- Factors such as climate (temperature and rainfall) affect the rate of weathering. Different types of weathering occur in different locations.
- Some rocks (especially sedimentary and unconsolidated material) are more susceptible to weathering.
- Weathering is not the same as erosion – but they are closely related processes.
- Material slides downwards towards the sea under gravity via a number of processes, known as mass movement. Mass movement is influenced by the type of material.
- Some mass-movement events occur very quickly, while others occur over years.
- Debris piles at the base of cliffs temporarily halt erosion.
- Landforms resulting from mass movement include scars (and debris piles), talus slopes and terraced cliffs.

Geomorphological Processes

Coasts are not just influenced by the action of the sea. Coastal recession is also influenced by subaerial processes including weathering and mass movement. In different climates retreat rates vary. The effect of climate on weathering and mass movement.

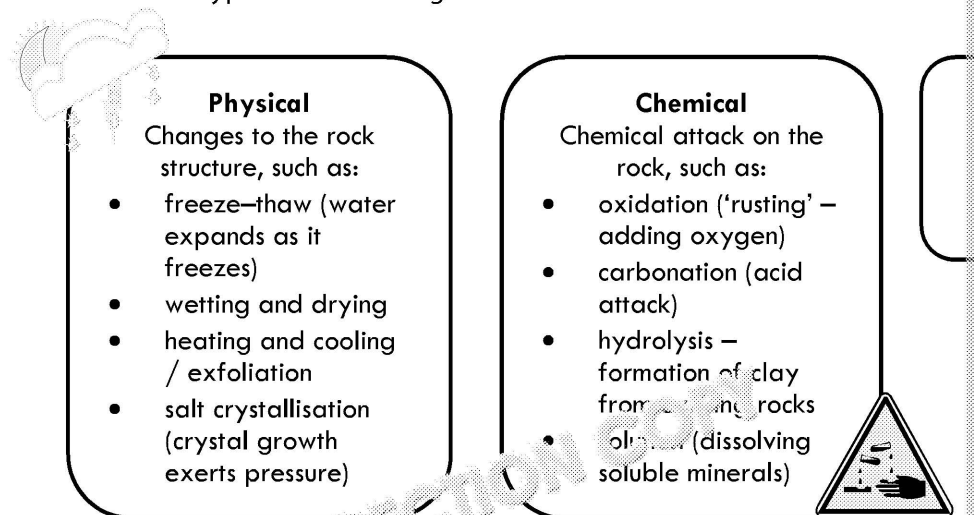
Weathering is the in-situ break-up of rock structure. It's often called *subaerial* weathering as it occurs on coastal land not affected by waves, but can be influenced from the sea by the Sun, wind, and rain.

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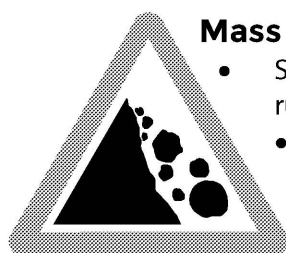


There are three types of weathering:



There are factors which alter the speed of weathering, such as:

- Climate
 - Precipitation and temperature – chemical weathering is faster in warm and wet conditions.
 - Diurnal temperature change and the aspect (direction) of cliffs influence the number of freeze–thaw cycles (e.g. north-facing cliffs will stay frozen in the day and have less cycles than south-facing cliffs).
 - Cliffs facing away from the prevailing winds and rain will remain drier.
- Lithology (geology) – softer and unconsolidated geology and well-jointed rocks are more susceptible to erosion. Granite, for example, erodes very slowly, and some rocks are not susceptible to chemical weathering.
- Habitats – whether the cliff has plants growing on it, or has burrowing animals. In this sandy cliff are made by nesting birds called sand martins. There is also a cliff, and a debris pile is seen at its base. The material is unconsolidated, so it erodes quickly.

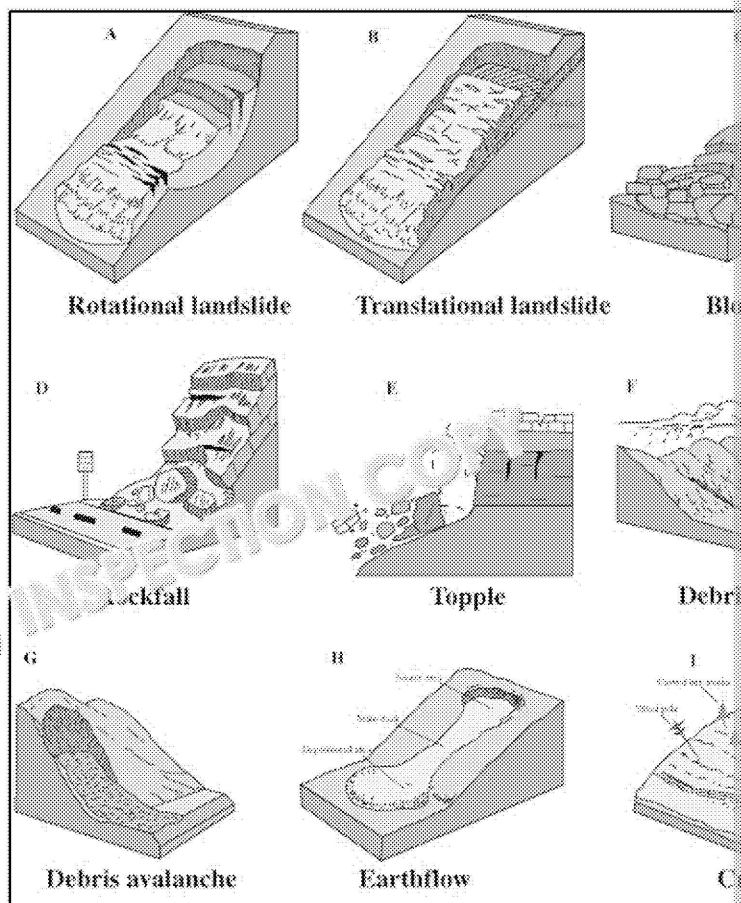


Mass movement is the downslope movement of soil and rock.

- Soil loses its mechanical strength when lubricated with water. Rainfall causes run-off, and mass movement is influenced by rock type.
- There are several different types – some are very slow, taking years or even centuries, while others are very fast, taking seconds.
 - Mass movement adds material from the land area to the sea.
 - The mass movement temporarily halts coastal erosion. The material protects the cliff and takes time and energy to be removed by the sea.

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A – also called a **rotational slump**. They occur in loose soils, with impermeable layers, and terraces formed by the curved rupture surface.

B – **landslides** keeps the material more intact – can be fast, and occur when the slope towards the sea.

D and E – **rockfalls (blockfalls)** and **topples** occur quickly, blocks fall from the cliff. They occur when cliffs are undercut, or from freeze–thaw.

H – **mudflows** occur when soil is lubricated with rainwater and material quickly moves down the slope.

I – **creep** is a very slow process, and forms terraces as the soil conditions change.

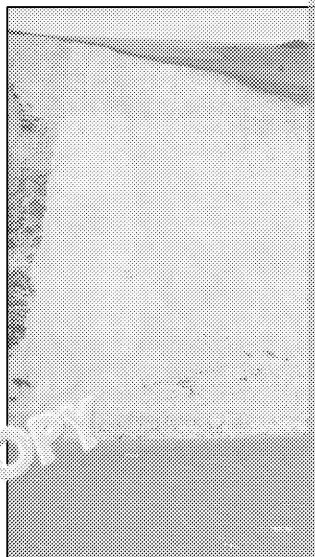
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Features of Mass Movement

Mass movement leads to several features of the cliff.

In this photo we can see the scar left behind from a rapid rockfall. We know this happened quickly because the chalk is uniformly white – weathering and plant colonisation have not occurred. The debris pile at the foot of the cliff protects the cliff from the sea while the debris is worn down and transported away.



Chalk is a sedimentary rock that is susceptible to chemical weathering. It is a porous rock that can hold a lot of water, and is well-indicated.

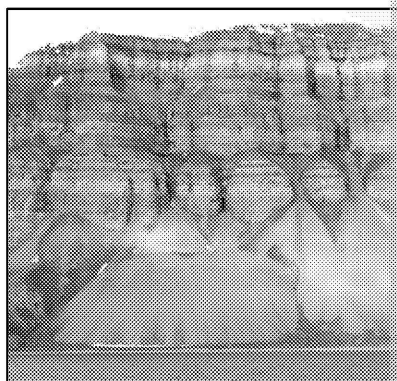
Sometimes we see a scar left behind from the flow of unconsolidated soil and sea.



E.g.

the cliffs of Dover (chalk)

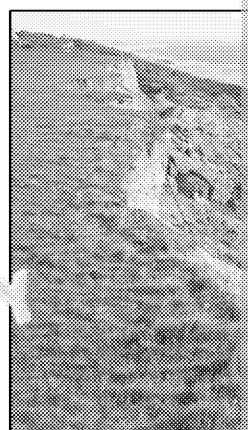
In contrast, this image shows talus slopes in Svalbard. Freeze-thaw weathering has dislodged the material because of the freeze-thaw cycles in the cold environment. The talus (scree) deposits have probably taken many years to build to this size.



E.g.

Cold environments

This photo shows a series of cliff terraces caused by several rotational slump events. The material is clearly unconsolidated soil. Vegetation is starting to colonise the lower terraces, which will help to stabilise the surface layers – but further movement to the sea can and probably will occur.



E.g.

Norfolk

If you only remember these three things

- ① Weathering occurs on the land and cliffs. Material is transported to the coastal zone, mainly from rivers.
- ② Mass movement causes material to slide or fall from the cliff face to the beach.
- ③ Mass-movement events cause characteristic features such as talus slopes and terraces. The debris can temporarily halt localised erosion.

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Activities

Consolidation questions

1. What is the difference between weathering and erosion?

.....

.....

2. Which form of mass movement can be very fast?

.....

3. How does climate affect weathering rates?

.....

.....

4. Which type of material is the slowest to weather?

.....

5. Which type of feature is most likely to occur after freeze-thaw?

.....

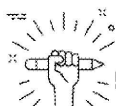
6. What is required for cliff terraces to develop?

.....




.....

Take it further

Here's a recent news article: [zzed.uk/9991-birling-gap-fall](https://www.zzed.uk/9991-birling-gap-fall)
How does this rockfall relate to the cycle in coastal landscapes?



Student Checks

Topic	What Do I Know?	No Idea 	Probably 	Sure 	
Subaerial Processes	Weathering				
	Mass movement				
	Landforms				

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Causes of Sea Level Change

Present and Future

Key words

- ✓ **Ice age:** Sustained period of reduced global temperatures during which ice sheets expand and advance into lower altitudes.
- ✓ **Sea level rise:** Addition of water to the oceans, resulting in the water's height increasing, inundating land and increasing flood risk to low-lying areas.
- ✓ **Isostatic change:** A local change in the level of the land relative to a fixed sea level.
- ✓ **Eustatic change:** A type of change in sea level that affects the whole planet, due to a change in the volume of water stored in the oceans.
- ✓ **Isostatic readjustment (post-glacial rebound):** The surface height of a land area rises after ice melts, therefore pressure release.
- ✓ **Accretion:** Deposition of sediment on the land surface. The weight causes the land to sink.
- ✓ **Subsidence:** Lowering of the land's surface locally.
- ✓ **Relic features / coastlines:** Landforms that were formed in the past – such as beaches – but are no longer affected by their original processes, but rather by subaerial processes.
- ✓ **Raised beach (marine terrace):** A deposit of sand which formed when the sea level was lower, but is now above the current sea level.
- ✓ **Fossil cliffs:** Cliffs that are located above current sea level. They are no longer affected by subaerial processes instead.
- ✓ **Ria:** A river valley, or a system of river valleys, that is flooded during sea level rise.
- ✓ **Fjord:** A glacial valley that has been flooded by sea level rise. Glacial troughs are flooded, when sea levels were lower.
- ✓ **Dalmatian coast:** Islands remaining above water level from aligned valleys, as sea level rose.
- ✓ **Thermal expansion:** If the atmosphere warms, heat energy is transferred to the oceans. The water expands, increasing in volume. This causes sea level to rise.

Key points

- Sea level is related to climate based on the amount of ice on the land – during an ice age, sea level falls and it rises again once the ice melts.
- Eustatic changes are rises or falls in sea level.
- Isostatic changes are local-scale changes of the land level relative to the ocean. This occurs due to the release of ice weight during an ice age. The UK is currently experiencing rebounding. The south is sinking! Accretion and subsidence, and local tectonic activity, are also factors.
- If the sea level falls, or the land level rises, then current beaches and features are left behind the sea. They form raised beaches and relic features.
- If sea level rises, then features are flooded – such as fjords and flooded glacial troughs.
- Sea level is rising due to human activity – rising global temperature is melting glaciers and ice sheets. As water accumulates in the oceans, sea level rises. As ocean water warms, it expands – taking up more space.
- The effects of sea level rise will be devastating to our coastal communities, cities, and infrastructure, and also other effects, such as water quality issues and loss of farmland.
- Humans therefore need to limit CO₂ emissions to stop the greatest rises in sea level. It is estimated that sea level may rise by two metres or more!

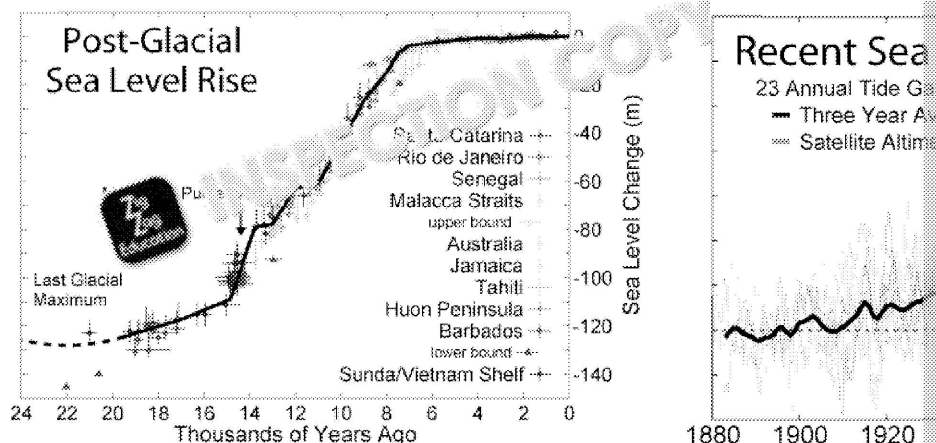
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How Has Sea Level Changed in the Past?

Sea level changes with the climate.

- During ice ages, water is stored on the land as ice – it falls on the land as snow for thousands of years.
- Therefore, run-off into the oceans decreases.
- Global sea level falls – during the last ice age, sea level might have been as much as 120 metres lower than today.
- Once the ice age ends, sea level rises again as the ice melts. This occurs rapidly – as shown on the graph overleaf.
- The second graph shows the smaller changes in sea level since 1880. Note the scale in centimetres rather than metres.



What are Eustatic, Isostatic and Tectonic Change?

Eustatic change

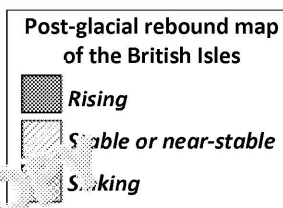
When the global sea level changes.

Isostatic change

When the local land rises or sinks relative to the global sea level.

Eustatic:

- Ice ages cause sea level to rise and fall, depending on the amount of ice on the land.
- Humans are warming the planet through greenhouse gas emissions. This means that sea level is currently rising, as more land ice melts.
- Sea level has been higher in the distant past than today.
- When sea level rises, valleys and glacial troughs (that were formed when sea level was lower) are flooded.



Isostatic:

- During the last ice age, the weight of ice on the land pushed the crust downwards into the mantle.
- Now that the ice has melted, the weight is released, and the land rises once again – quickly at first. This is called **isostatic readjustment** or **post-glacial rebound**.
- In the UK, Scotland had a thicker ice sheet than the south of England. Therefore, this created a pivot effect – Scotland is now rising, while the south is sinking, as shown on the map.

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- This can lead to coastal features being stranded away from the sea, while other features are submerged.
- Isostatic rebound is a very slow process compared to eustatic change.
- **Accretion** is where sediment is deposited on the land. Like ice, the weight of the sediment can cause the land to sink.

Tectonic:

- Very slow changes – over millions of years. The development of mid-ocean ridges can cause the sea floor to rise upwards. This reduces the volume of the ocean, causing mean sea level to rise. If sea-floor spreading can increase the ocean's volume.
- If tectonic plates collide there is more space for water in the ocean, and a fall in sea level.
- On volcanic islands, lava eruptions can increase or decrease the height of the island, either by the addition of new land, or as erupted lava is spilled into the sea.
- Tectonic uplift or displacement can also raise or lower local areas of land relative to the sea.

Emergent Features (raised beaches and marine platforms)

- When the land rises faster than sea level, or if sea levels fall, the current beach is no longer affected by the sea. They are called '**relic features**'.
- Instead, they are affected by subaerial processes such as weathering.
- Examples include raised beaches and wave-cut platforms, fossil cliffs showing former sea levels and other landforms such as stacks.
- Sometimes a series of terraces develops if the sea level drops several times.

What are the relic features shown in the photos below?



Isles of Jura and Arran, but also in Cornwall and New Zealand.

Submergent Features (rias and fjords)

- When sea level rises, features that were created on land below current sea level become submerged.
- In areas where there were glaciers, these are often in glacial troughs.
- In areas without glaciers, these can be in river valleys.
- Of course, features are also flooded if the land sinks (isostatic change).

Rias

Flooded river valleys and their tributaries mean that unlike the straight fjords, rias are curved and are much shallower (deepest at the mouth).



Devon and Cornwall, Sydney – Australia, Chesapeake Bay – United States.

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Fjords

Fjords are flooded U-shaped glacial troughs. They are narrow, very deep (deepest inland), and have steep walls.



E.g.

Norway, Canada and Alaska, New Zealand, Greenland and Chile.



Dalmatian coast

Rias that run parallel to the land, forming ridges of islands.



E.g.

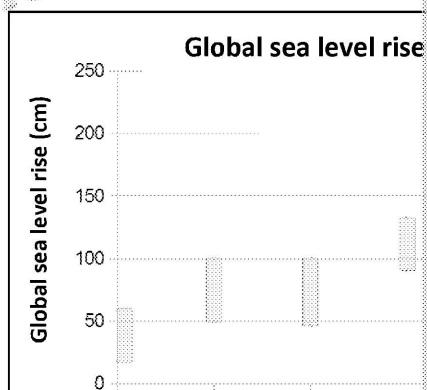
Croatia – where the feature is named after.

Predicted Sea Level Rise

Sea level rises in two ways:

- **Melting ice sheets** – as volume of water to the ocean increases.
- **Thermal expansion** as water warms increases the volume.

We're not certain how much sea level will rise by – partially how ice sheets will respond to climate change, and it's also down to us – how much CO₂ that we will emit. The more we emit, the more warming that might occur.



The graph shows some projected ranges of sea level rise between 2000 and 2100 – could be two metres. This would have catastrophic results to those living in coastal areas.

The speed at which sea level has changed is increasing each year – it's currently 3mm per year.

Furthermore, some coastlines in tectonically active regions are at risk of local isostatic rebound out of the sea, and causing subsidence in others.

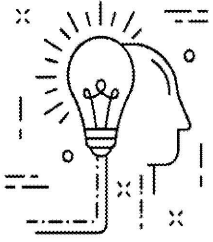
The Future Effects of Sea Level Rise

- One of the largest threats from sea level rise is to the people living in coastal cities developed due to ports – think of London and New York, for example. Damage from the rising sea level will be significant (**adaptation**).
- There are many countries and small islands which are very close to sea level. Many countries will be flooded.
 - Population will need to migrate further inland, putting pressure on existing land.
- Agricultural land will be lost.
 - Increased pressure and intensity inland.
- Aquifers will be contaminated by saltwater, saltwater further up rivers.
- Greater threat of storm surges.
- Increased area exposed to coastal erosion – increased coastal retreat.
- Habitats will also be lost.

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If you only remember these three things



- 1 During ice ages, sea level falls because the water is locked up in ice. The water returns to the sea during the interglacial periods and the land pushes the plate downwards into the mantle.
- 2 If sea level changes, it's called eustatic change. If the land rises or falls relative to the sea, it's an isostatic change. If the land rises, we get emergent features such as raised beaches. If the sea rises, we get submergent features such as rias (river valleys drowned by the sea).
- 3 Sea level is rising due to climate change – land ice volume is increasing through thermal expansion. The catastrophic impact on those living in coastal areas – including the UK – means we need to reduce CO₂ emissions and limit the damage that will take place.



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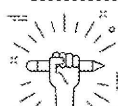
Activities

Consolidation questions

- How much did sea level fall during the last ice age?
.....
- How has sea level changed over the past 3,000 years?
.....
.....
- Why are parts of Scotland rising out of the sea?
.....
.....
- How are relic features eroded?
.....
.....
- Why is there uncertainty over how much sea level will rise in the future?
.....
.....

Take it further

Here's an interactive map showing the areas flooded due to climate change to determine the temperature, and you can pan the map to show different world. zzed.uk/9583-sea-rise-map



Student checks

Topic	What Do I Know?	No Idea ☹️	Nearly 😐	Sure 😊	
Past, Present and Future Climate Change	Past climate change				
	Isostatic, eustatic and tectonic changes				
	Emergent features				
	Submergent features				
	Predicted sea level rise				

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The Effects of Coastal Recession and Coastal Flooding – and Why It's a Problem

Key words

- ✓ **Dam-building:** Building dams inland cuts off much of the sediment reaching the coast, leading to increased erosion.
- ✓ **Dredging:** The removal of sand and gravel from the coast, thought by some to reduce the risk of coastal erosion.
- ✓ **Coastal management:** Technique of controlling the rate of coastal erosion and protecting coastal communities.
- ✓ **Coastal flooding:** The sudden inundation of coastal areas which occurs when sea levels rise above normal high-tide water levels.
- ✓ **Depression:** Low-pressure weather system associated with strong winds and coastal flooding during onshore winds and low pressure (storm surge).
- ✓ **Tropical cyclone:** A revolving storm found near to the equator, fuelled by warm water. They can result, as a cause of coastal flooding.
- ✓ **Storm surge:** An offshore rise in sea level – low-pressure weather systems and coastal flooding, e.g. from tropical cyclones, depressions and funnelling from the shore.
- ✓ **Mangroves:** Tropical forests which grow in intertidal zones. They are important for coastal protection from flooding.
- ✓ **Climate change:** Alteration to long-term weather patterns, e.g. increased temperature and sea level rise which can influence sea level and storm occurrence and severity.
- ✓ **Adaptation:** Coping with the effects of sea level rise.
- ✓ **Mitigation:** Reducing the severity of climate change.
- ✓ **Climate refugee:** A person who has been forced to move from their home because of a changing climate, such as sea level rise, or droughts.

Key points

- Coastlines retreat because of the erosion, weathering and mass-movement processes and the geology that have been covered in the previous chapters. Erosion rates are not constant throughout the year – winter storms can cause sudden retreat.
- Coastal communities are under threat of coastal flooding because of climate change and the increased severity of storms.
- Coastal areas are also under threat from increased coastal erosion because of sea level rise, dredging, and coastal management – all three can reduce the availability of sediment.
- Coastal flooding also occurs because of storm surges from both depressions and tropical cyclones.
- To reduce the threat of coastal erosion and sea level rise, we need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (mitigation) and adapt to cope with the remaining sea level rise.
- The effects of coastal recession and flooding can be classified as social and economic impacts – include homeowners, businesses and infrastructure – in countries of all levels of development.
- Rising sea level will create millions of climate refugees – forced from their homes by a changing climate. As many as 2 billion people could be displaced by 2100.

Natural Causes of Coastal Recession (retreat)

These causes have already been covered in the previous chapters on coastal erosion and mass movement. If you need a quick refresher, read the points below:

- Coastal erosion processes undercut cliffs to create notches (hydraulic action) which can lead to cliffs collapse.
- Erosion rates change with the seasons. Much of the erosion in coasts occurs during winter (powerful, destructive waves), and immense hydraulic action. There is less erosion in summer as beach profiles are built up with constructive waves. A single storm can significantly change beach profiles causing large cliffs or features to collapse.

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- On long-term scales, we classify coasts as high-energy or low-energy – high-energy coasts have steep shores and more erosional features compared to the sandy beaches and dunes of low-energy coasts.
- Long-term wind direction affects longshore drift, and the development of spits and bars. While deposited material builds up beaches, it is quickly moved by the erosion rates.
- Fetch is the distance that wind has blown over water. The longer the fetch, the more energy is imparted to the waves.
- Tidal range affects erosion – the higher up cliffs the water reaches, the greater the erosion.
- Geology – the weaker and more jointed the rock (especially unconsolidated rocks), the more susceptible it is to erosion and mass movement. Igneous rocks erode very slowly.
- Weathering and mass movement work together to shape cliffs that are not directly affected by waves and currents. The speed of mass movement is influenced by geology.

Human Causes of Coastal Recession

When coasts are starved of sediment, the effectiveness of natural barriers including sand dunes and beach bars is reduced. Coastal recession increases. The impacts can be generated by a number of factors, including dredging companies (who may have government permits), to national governments.

- Dams – building large dams reduces the flow of sediment from rivers. Approaching the coastal zone is derived from rivers – the impact can be severe. The Nile River, for example, the construction of the Aswan Dam in 1964, causing rapid recession and subsidence.
- Dredging – sand is a non-renewable resource and rapid urbanisation is increasing the demand for concrete. Material is dredged from offshore, removing natural barriers and beaches. Material is also dredged for beach nourishment.
- Management – more on coastal management in the next chapter – but offshore nourishment and building groynes trap sediment. The sediment trapped by groynes is transported down the coast by longshore drift.

Coastal Flooding

Coastal areas are at risk from flooding. The risk is increased through local changes in land use, storms, surges, and sea level and climate change. Some coasts, especially low-lying coasts, are at high risk of flooding, especially those in areas where tropical cyclones also occur. Flooding is a greater risk than the risk of coastal erosion.

- In local areas, people are increasing the risk of flooding, removing the natural defences such as mangrove forests. Mangrove forests reduce the height of incoming waves and trap sediment.
- Climate change is melting land-ice, adding water volume to the ocean. This leads to sea level expansion. Low-lying islands are most at risk – two thirds of Bangladesh is less than 1 metre above sea level. Islands such as the Maldives are under threat as the highest point is only 2.4 metres above sea level. Small rises in sea level will flood large parts of these countries, resulting in thousands of people being evacuated from their homes.
- Storm surges are caused in two ways:
 - Winter storms (depressions) – occur at high tide (including spring tides) and low air pressure release pressure on the ocean, helping to pull up the water. Storms can also increase flood risk, such as a funnelling effect of the coast – e.g. the 1953 North Sea flood and 2013.
 - Tropical cyclones (e.g. hurricanes) – the same factors occur as the hurricane, but the effects are often extreme, e.g. Hurricane Sandy.
- Climate change will increase the threat of storm surges by combining higher frequency of winter storms, and the increased severity of storms and hurricanes. With more water, the more energy given to hurricanes.
- There are always uncertainties over the effects of climate change, which include:
 - Using models to predict future changes.
 - Complex climate systems may not be fully understood and there are many uncertainties over land use change.
 - We're not certain how much greenhouse gases humans will produce – mitigation, development, etc. That's why we develop different emission scenarios.

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- There are two ways of coping with climate change:
 - **Mitigation** is reducing the scale of change (e.g. reducing CO₂ emissions)
 - **Adaptation** is coping with the effects of climate change after the event
- **To cope with climate change, we need both adaptation and mitigation.**
- In the UK, we've built many coastal defences including following the East of London Thames Barrier to protect London.

Effects of Coastal Recession and Coastal Flooding

- Houses and property are lost slowly as part of coastal recession, while coastal flooding areas very quickly.
- The effects can be:
 - economic – value of the lost and damaged property (housing and built infrastructure, pipelines and cables), agricultural land and business premises and cost of insurance. Residents may receive some compensation for their loss of property
 - social – relocation and health effects (including stress and mental health issues), loss of property, housing and the need to move
- Property is lost throughout the world – tropical cyclones affect both developed and developing countries. The results can be catastrophic – for example the loss of economically important areas.



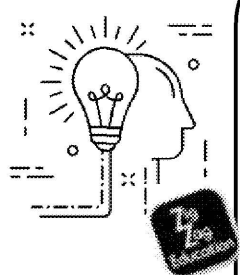
E.9

- Hurricane Katrina (United States, 2005) – a catastrophic storm surge caused a 7.5–8.5 metre storm surge
- Hurricane Irma (Caribbean, 2017)
- UK winter storms of 2013–2014

Climate Refugees

- **Climate refugees** are people who are forced to relocate to more hospitable areas. This could either be due to climate (e.g. droughts and water insecurity), or other factors. Climate refugees can either result from a single event, or the move can be a gradual process as conditions worsen.
- Greater pressure is placed on the land in the areas which refugees migrate to, leading to increased competition for jobs, housing and personal stress for the individuals involved.
- A scientific paper published in 2017 suggested that by 2100 there could be 200 million climate refugees caused by sea level rise. The total human population could be 11 billion by 2100.
- Those affected will live in coastal areas and low-lying islands.

If you only remember these three things



- 1 Natural coastal processes, geology and human activity contribute to coastal recession and flooding, raising sea level rise and storm surges.
- 2 Climate change is a major threat to millions of people. To reduce the threat, we need to reduce the level of emissions and learn to cope with the effects of change (adaptation).
- 3 Sea level rise will displace millions of people from their homes, creating climate refugees. One paper in 2017 suggests that 200 million refugees resulting from climate change by 2100.

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Activities

Consolidation questions

1. When does the most erosion occur?

.....

.....

2. Why can dam-building increase the coastal recession rate?

.....

.....

3. What are the two causes of storm surges?

.....

.....

4. Which feature protects London from storm surges?

.....

5. What is a consequence of climate refugees?

.....

.....

Take it further

Read the following article on the key moments of the 2013–2014 winter storms at:
zzed.uk/9991-winter-storms

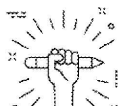
Read about Hurricane Sandy's storm surge at:
zzed.uk/9991-sandy-storm

While the actual paper is inaccessible, here's an article outlining the 2 billion refugee figure.
zzed.uk/9991-rising-seas





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Student checks

Topic	What Do I Know?	No Idea 	Nearly 	Sure 	
The Effects of Coastal Recessions and Flooding 	Natural causes of coastal recession				
	Human causes of coastal recession				
	Causes of coastal flooding				
	Effects of coastal flooding and recession				
	Climate refugees				

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Coastal Management

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Key words

- ✓ **Coastal management:** Technique of controlling the rate of coastal erosion and protection.
- ✓ **Hard engineering:** The construction of large-scale construction schemes to disrupt natural processes, in order to defend an area against flooding or coastal erosion.
- ✓ **Soft engineering:** The use of the natural environments and materials that work with nature to provide defence against flooding or coastal erosion.
- ✓ **Sustainable management:** Policies which promote long-lasting, beneficial and sustainable development.
- ✓ **Strategic realignment:** Management which allows coastal erosion including removal of depositional features such as marshes.
- ✓ **Hold the line:** Maintaining the existing coastline by retaining current flood defence structures in locations where they have not previously existed.
- ✓ **No active intervention:** Allowing nature take its course by not interfering with natural processes.
- ✓ **Shoreline Management Plans (SMPs):** Long-term plans in England and Wales for coastal defence, considering the effects of management on people and the environment.
- ✓ **Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM):** Sustainable development with an integrated approach encompassing the system as a whole, and accounting for different land uses.
- ✓ **Cost-Benefit Analysis (CBA):** The process of choosing whether a scheme is worth the cost, by weighing financial, social and environmental advantages and disadvantages.
- ✓ **Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA):** A study commissioned to find out the potential effects of an engineering strategy upon the natural world.
- ✓ **Winners:** People who benefit from coastal management – e.g. those who own property protected by a hold-the-line policy.
- ✓ **Losers:** People who lose out from coastal management – e.g. those who own property that is not planned for their section of the coast, meaning that their property will be lost.
- ✓ **Conflicts:** Tensions between the different users in a coastal environment – e.g. between tourism and fishing.

Key points

- We use coastal engineering to protect areas of the coast from erosion, and flooding.
- In the past, areas of the coast were protected by hard engineering projects which were effective, but having the ability to damage the environment, including dune loss.
- Nowadays, sustainable management and soft engineering are preferred. These ensure that coasts are protected for future generations.
- In England and Wales, we manage coasts through Shoreline Management Plans at the cell / sub-cell level. We can use all of the different hard and soft options, and decide whether an area is protected or allowed to erode, based on the value of the land.
- A larger-scale sustainable management scheme is Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM), which covers both land and sea, and all of the different land uses.
- We can use a tool called Cost-Benefit Analysis (CBA) to decide whether the benefits of a scheme outweigh the costs.
- Each scheme must go through an Environmental Impact Assessment to appraise the effects of the scheme on the environment, and the costs of construction and later operation of the scheme.
- Coastal management areas are complicated areas with many different uses. Some will benefit from the scheme – these winners. But others will inevitably lose out – we call them losers. Managing these conflicts between planners and losers.

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Why Do We Manage the Coast?

Coastlines are very important to us – many of us live near the coast, and we use it for shipping, agricultural land and tourism.

Coasts are under threat from human activity, both directly and indirectly – such as sea level resulting from anthropogenic climate change.

We therefore manage the coast for two reasons:

Reduce erosion (coastal recession)

Some coastlines are very valuable – especially around large towns and cities. In these cases, we want to stop coastal retreat.

Reduce

Sometimes we want to build up the coastline, for example, to protect large towns and cities. Sometimes we want to build up the coastline, for example, to protect large towns and cities.

We can build structures to help protect the coast, or manage the physical environment in other ways:

Hard engineering

Often older schemes, but still make up a significant part of coastal engineering. They are said to work **against** nature. Their use may have unforeseen consequences.



Soft engineering (including beach nourishment)
Often newer schemes, but still make up a significant part of coastal engineering.

Hard Engineering

- Hard engineering involves pouring concrete, or using rocks and timber – they're expensive projects, can damage the environment and can be visually obtrusive.
- They are said to work **against** nature. Their use may have unforeseen consequences.



Here's a rundown of some common types.

Name of scheme	How it works	Advantages
Groynes	Wooden structures run across the beach, designed to trap sand and shingle which is moved by longshore drift.	Allow for the development of beaches for tourist use.
Sea wall	Hard concrete barrier to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> stop erosion raise the height deflect the energy back out to sea – they are sometimes curved for this reason. 	If they are well-maintained, they can last a long time, and are effective at protecting large settlements and important installations.

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Name of scheme	How it works	Advantages
Rip rap (rock armour)	Piles of boulders to absorb wave impact.	Large, hard rocks last a very long time, with low maintenance costs.
Revetment	Wooden or rock structures to decrease wave action.	Fairly cheap, and quick to build.
Offshore breakwater	Waves break out to sea, reducing the erosion at the coast.	Can create habitats – artificial reefs.

There are other forms of hard engineering, such as gabions and barrages.

Soft Engineering

- Soft engineering involves enhancing natural processes and ecosystems in order to protect the coastline. They can create new and important ecosystems such as dunes and marshes.
- It is said to work **with** nature.

Here's a rundown of some common types.

Name of scheme	How it works	Advantages
Beach nourishment and reprofiling	The level of the beach is built up with imported sand to absorb wave energy. With reprofiling, the slope of the beach is altered.	Creates a valuable and pleasant tourist attraction.
Cliff regrading and drainage	Reduces the potential for mass movement by reducing the water content of cliffs and the water content of cliffs).	Protects infrastructure and maintains tourist amenities.
Dune regeneration	New dunes are created, or existing dunes are fixed. Sometimes they are fenced off, or even old Christmas trees can be used to trap the sand.	Create or enhance a valuable habitat. Cheap to implement – nature does it for us!

Another 'soft' form of management is climate change mitigation – reducing and therefore sea level.

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Sustainable Management

Recently, there has been an increase in various forms of management. Sustainable management decreases our impact on the coast, so that it's there for future generations to use and enjoy.

For example, we decide which parts of the coast are worth protecting, and which parts we allow to be eroded to provide a source of sediment for downstream processes.

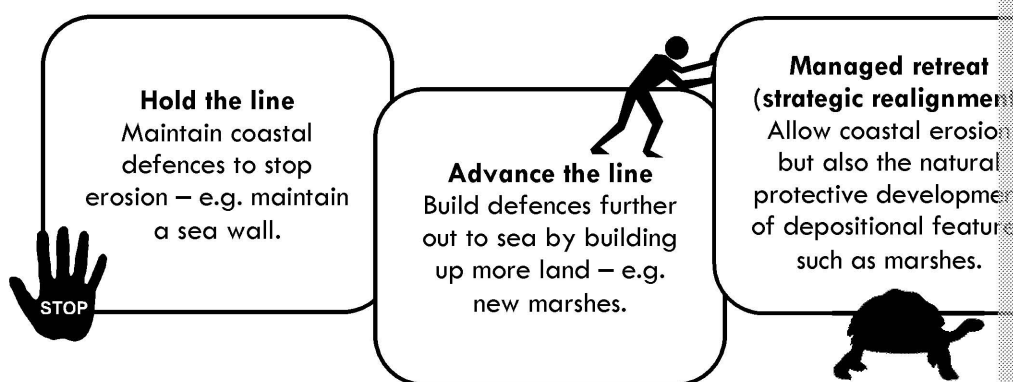
The land in this photo has been flooded by the sea – the increased salt content of the soil may have caused this tree to die.



Sustainable management takes in many different aspects such as the environment (land and sea), habitat value, land use and cultural heritage (and therefore value), settlement, social and political components, infrastructure and the feasibility of the coastal engineering. There are many users of the coast, and each user has different demands. Therefore coastal management is a complex process!

Sustainable coastal engineering includes management, monitoring and adaptation. It may include relocation of residents and finding alternative livelihoods.

There are several ways that we can manage a particular stretch of coastline:



Shoreline Management Plans (SMPs) – England and Wales

A combination of the four methods above can be used within **shoreline management plans**. There are 22 plans in England and Wales, which cover all 11 sediment cells and some of their sub-cells. The plans assume that sediment cells are closed systems.

The management plans are based on three time scales: up to a hundred years in the future – to plan how the shape of the coast will change. Different policies are created in order to protect important areas, in some cases letting other areas erode to provide a sediment source for places further along the coast in the direction of longshore sediment transport.

The plans contain maps showing the predicted position of the coast over a range of time and the forms of management used. They also ensure that all international policies are followed.

The plans are designed to link together the different authorities which are responsible for coastal management, so that actions in one place don't adversely affect other places.

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Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM)

An overarching, large-scale form of sustainable management is Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM), developed after the 1992 Rio Earth Summit. Sustainable management protects the coastal environment. All different users of the landscape, on a local scale, are considered within the plan for the coast and ensure that some uses don't cause problems elsewhere.

ICZM takes into account long-term changes and uses, and monitors these over time. It is 'holistic' to describe ICZM – it means overarching – that all users, uses, social, economic and environmental resources are included, and the wider landscape is considered. Coastlines are under constant development from many sources.



E.g.

EU, Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP).

Cost-Benefit Analysis (CBA)

To help work out what the costs or benefits of coastal protection are greater, a 'cost-benefit analysis' can be used. The costs and benefits can be environmental, social and economic. The tool can be used to compare different options.

For example, we can weigh up:

- cost of the engineering vs value of the land and housing
- cost of erosion in the area vs downstream sediment availability and protection (SMP/ICZM)
- cost of the social stress of moving vs benefits of a scheme

Some of the costs and benefits are difficult to measure. How easily can you put a value on the social upheaval of moving?

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

All coastal engineering projects have an assessment of the damage that they could cause. The impacts can include changes to erosion and deposition rates and their effects on sediment budgets and water quality, and the impacts while the engineering works are being carried out.

The assessment is a report that looks at both the construction and long-term impacts. It is completed before the project starts.

Winners and Losers

Because of the complex coastal environment with many users and landowners, coastal engineering will always cause someone problems. SMPs look at large stretches of coastline so they must consider – on the land surrounding the coast, on the beaches, and offshore uses. Coastal Engineering is expensive – so cost benefit analysis may be used to weigh up the value of the land against the cost of engineering works.

Some people are seen as 'winners' (who benefit from the scheme) and others as 'losers' (who are disadvantaged). There will always be some people who will be seen to lose out. For example, property for sale near the coast may have a greater need of a downstream sediment supply. However, the need for coastal protection is throughout the world. In less developed countries the rural poor have the most problems with erosion and flooding – including property, land and livelihoods.

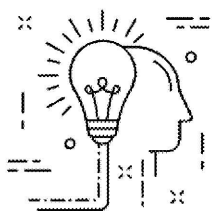
The issue of winners and losers creates **conflicts** – for example, landowners who want to build, authorities who cannot afford protection, environmental pressure groups who oppose environmentally damaging, and planners responsible for overseeing ICZM.

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In the following scenario, a person living in a village where no active intervention is taking place is a loser. However, someone living down the coast and who is, therefore, protected from the recession is a winner. People living in the middle are winners if the coastal recession leads to marsh development (great habitat for birds).

If you only remember these three things...



① We manage our coasts to reduce erosion and coastal recession – but we have to be careful – stopping erosion in one place can cause it in other places along the coastline.

② We used to use hard engineering – building long sea walls, for example. Of course we still use hard engineering in some places – but we now try to use soft engineering.

③ With pressures on the coast increasing with population growth, development and sea level rise, sustainable management of the coasts for future generations. ICZM, SMPs, etc. are all about checking and implementing sustainable management plans for the coast or management within one part of the coast doesn't affect other places. However, there will always be winners and losers.



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Activities

Consolidation questions

1. One of the main reasons for coastal management is to reduce coastal erosion. What is the main reason?

.....

.....

2. Why do hard forms of management 'work against nature'?

.....

.....

3. What type of coastal management is taking place in the photo?

.....

4. Which coastal management allows land to be lost to the sea?

.....

5. How many Shoreline Management Plans are there in England and Wales?

.....

6. Which sustainable management structure was implemented following the

.....

7. Which tool can be used to appraise whether the advantages of coastal protection outweigh the disadvantages?

.....

8. What report must be completed before any coastal management scheme can be implemented?

.....

9. Why does coastal management inevitably lead to conflicts?

.....

.....

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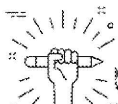


Take it further

See whether your nearest stretch of coast is being managed (mainly England and Wales): [zzed.uk/9583-coastal-erosion-map](https://www.zzed.uk/9583-coastal-erosion-map)

You can view the types of management – e.g. hold the line and no active defence – and see how land use affects the style of management.

You can also see how coastal flooding affects culture – here's an example of a coastal town which is experiencing rapid flooding in the coastal ecosystem: [zzed.uk/9583-coastal-erosion-map](https://www.zzed.uk/9583-coastal-erosion-map)



Student checks

Topic	What do you know?	No Idea ☹️	Nearly 😊	Sure 😄	
Coastal Management	Reasons for managing the coast				
	Hard engineering				
	Soft engineering				
	Sustainable management				
	Shoreline Management Plans				
	Integrated Coastal Zone Management				
	Cost-benefit analysis				
	Environmental Impact Assessments				
	Winners, losers and conflicts				

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Exam Advice

Time management

If you open the paper and see a question you didn't expect: don't panic! Take a moment to follow the steps below. Whatever you do, don't just start writing down everything you know.

Before you rush headlong into the exam, take a moment to look at the questions and plan your answer.

Reading the whole paper

- Remember to take your time at the beginning, reading through all of the questions.
- You don't have to answer them in any particular order, but be aware that sometimes it's better to answer the questions in a particular order, and earlier questions might be easier than later ones.



Reading the questions

- Too often students rush and lose marks.
- It might be useful to underline key words and command words to help you understand what the question is asking.

Planning

- After reading through the question, make sure you plan your answer.
- This stage is key to getting higher marks, so make sure you don't skip it. Planning can help you:
 - structure your answer
 - answer the question properly
 - save time
- You may do any rough work and planning in your exam paper, but make sure to ~~put a line through it~~ to indicate it is not to be marked.

Checking

- Leave some time after to go through your answers, correcting spelling, grammar and terminology errors and making sure you haven't left anything out.
- Finally, double-check that your candidate details are on any extra sheets you have used, and put them in the correct order in your answer book, using the Zig Zag tag to attach them if necessary.
- Put a line through any pages you don't want marked, e.g. planning pages.



- Remember to proofread your answers for spelling, grammar and punctuation as content.
- You can use as much time as you need, but try to avoid being put off by the time around you.
- Any mistakes you make don't use correction fluid.
- If you get stuck, move on to another question and come back to it at the end.
- Adopt a formal style, but be clear and concise.
- Your introduction should state the issue at hand, give a brief overview of the information.
- The body of your answer should provide evidence for your points, and for the points you make. For long-answer questions, you should demonstrate your understanding and recommendation need to present viewpoints.

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Writing

Geographical terms

One of the points you are being assessed on is the correct and appropriate use of geographical terms. You should have assembled a list of key terms that might be useful for this exam, so make sure you learn them and think about how you might include them in your answers. If you are scared of forgetting these words when you start writing your answers, you could try writing them all down as soon as you are permitted to start writing – remember to cross them out at the end though!

However, don't use geographical terms if they are unnecessary or you are unsure. Include them only when they are relevant and useful.

Getting the tone right

As well as using key geographical terms in your answers, your writing should strike the right tone. This helps your answer to be considered as clear and professional.

Do ✓	Don't
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write out abbreviations in full the first time you use them Be clear when a statement is a personal opinion as opposed to fact Use linking words: thus, therefore Try to include the source of a fact if you can, e.g. according to the WHO, the death toll from the tsunami was 1,200. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write in the first person Use contractions Use slang terms and informal language Use rhetorical questions

It might help to think of yourself talking to your examiner, or a geography teacher who doesn't know you, so you need to make sure you are clear, but they do know about the topic. You don't need to explain every key term you use if it's not necessary.

Ask your teacher if you are unsure about your current 'tone', but don't worry about it too much. The examiners are more focused on how you answer the question.

Spelling, punctuation, grammar and legibility

It can often be hard to think about these in the exam hall, but proper spelling, punctuation, grammar and legibility really help keep your meaning clear. They also keep your sentences from getting too long, which aids with clarity and readability.

While examiners are used to reading all sorts of handwriting, it is good to try to make your answers as legible as possible. One way to do this is to slow down while writing. Make sure your letters are an appropriate size. The final result should be a clear and legible answer before finishing any words which are especially tricky to write.



Quality of communication: writing skills are only important in that they help you to be clear and communicate your geographical knowledge and understanding. A clear and focused answer is better than a waffled answer stuffed with content.

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In the event of emergencies!

- All your planning and preparation means this isn't going to happen... But if the first rule is always to try to relax!
- Take a minute for some deep breaths, close your eyes and imagine a lush, green woodland... Clear your mind.
- Now read over the question, think over what you haven't said yet, and continue.

'Thinking like a geographer' and 'synopticity'

Learning to 'think like a geographer' is crucial for exam success and important for your understanding of the world.

As you are well aware, the world is a complicated place. Cause and effect, and how to pull information together, join up the dots, and work out why things happen in the world include space, place, environment, and culture.

Don't be afraid to draw on your own knowledge and other modules to help illustrate your answer. Be creative, original, and innovative, but use this skill wisely. Make sure you use that question rather than going off on a tangent or writing down *everything* you know, which is called 'synopticity'.

Here are a few tips on thinking like a geographer:

Consider the many aspects of the issue from many perspectives

- Think across the social/natural divide, using your knowledge of both human and physical geography.
- Involve many aspects of the issue: historical context, cultural perspectives, and the environment.
- SPEED can be a useful tool for thinking synoptically: social, political, economic, environmental, and demographic. But don't forget to consider cultural and material factors when appropriate.
- Try to see the issue from many viewpoints: work on your empathy.
- Don't be afraid to think outside the box!

Spatial concepts

- Geographical perspectives often focus on the importance of space, location, and the issues at hand.
- Think about movements and flows of people, goods, ideas, etc.
- Think about the effects of 'scale': local, regional, global.

Be creative

As long as your approach is logical and well justified, you can think in your own way.

Exam preparation

My take-home tips:

- ✓ Before the exam (Eat a good BREAKFAST)
- ✓ During the exam (Read the question CAREFULLY)
- ✓ Planning (HIGHLIGHT key words and concepts)
- ✓ After the exam (Take some time to RELAX!!!)

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Answers to Consolidation Questions

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Coastal Landscapes and Processes

1. Nearshore.
2. Rocky shores, often with high cliffs, powerful, destructive waves with strong backwash.
3. Unconsolidated material – e.g. sands, gravels and boulder clay.
4. The cracks in the rocks are weaknesses which can be exploited by erosional processes.
5. Rocks that are tilted towards the sea are more likely to erode quicker than rocks tilted away from the sea.
6. Concordant coasts.
7. Roots stabilise the dune, meaning that erosion is less likely. The stems also help by slowing down the wind speed and therefore the ability to transport material.
8. Mudflats don't have any vegetation – however they later become colonised by plants as they develop.

Erosion Processes and Landforms

1. Near to the shore, the water is shallower, meaning that the base of the rotational movement is closer to the shore.
2. The distance over the sea that the wind has blown.
3. Low-energy.
4. Any suitable difference, e.g. build up the beach or erode the beach, spilling in during outgoing tides, frequency.
5. Neap tide.
6. Ridges created by successive high tides.
7. a. hydraulic action (wave quarrying); b. solution; c. attrition.
8. Undercutting creates a notch – eventually the overburden collapses.
9. The hard rock is eroded slower, causing the headlands. Softer rock in between the bays.
10. Arch.

Transport and Deposition – Processes and Landforms

1. Suspension.
2. The wind or water has less velocity, meaning that it can't support as much material.
3. Bays are more sheltered, reducing the amount of energy for suspension, etc.
4. Swash-aligned.
5. Supply of sediment being transported down the coast, and a change in coastal morphology at the mouth of an estuary.
6. An island.
7. Barrier beach.
8. Cuspate foreland.
9. Allow any suitable suggestion, including erosion on the land (rivers, subaerial processes) and from out at sea, and from marine creatures.
10. Allow any suitable suggestion, such as wind, waves, currents.
11. Smaller, lower, eroded beach.
12. Changing equilibrium, many processes occurring at the same time, feedback loops.

Subaerial Processes (Weathering, Mass Movement and Erosion)

1. Weathering is in-situ break-up of rock, erosion transports the rock away.
2. Blockfall.
3. Moisture and warmth speed up chemical weathering, affect physical weathering.
4. Igneous rocks.
5. Talus (scree) slope.
6. Rotational movement of material, occurring over several periods. Allow any suggestion of material over impermeable rock.

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Causes of Sea Level Change (Past, Present and Future)

1. Around 120 metres.
2. Very little change until the last 140 or so years.
3. Isostatic rebound – the greater weight of ice pushed Scotland further down of the UK.
4. Subaerial weathering and mass movement.
5. It's unknown how much CO₂ we will produce and therefore the amount of models and emissions scenarios. We also don't know for certain how some warming – they could melt faster than predicted.

The Effects of Coastal Recession and Flooding – and What We Can Do

1. During the winter months, especially caused by winter storms.
2. Most of the input of material into the coastal zone is from rivers. Dams trap beaches have less ability to protect the coast.
3. Depressions (winter storms) and hurricanes, especially those that coincide with tides.
4. The Threat of Sea Level Rise.
5. Great physical stress through the migration process, loss of homes and property, increased environmental pressure and pressure on the job market in the area.

Coastal Management

1. To reduce the threat of coastal flooding.
2. They disrupt natural processes – e.g. cause sediment starvation downstream physically disrupt the environment.
3. Either beach nourishment or reprofiling.
4. Do nothing (no active intervention).
5. 22.
6. ICZM.
7. Cost-benefit analysis.
8. Environmental Impact Assessment.
9. Within any scheme covering lots of different stakeholders, there will always be someone to complain about a scheme.

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