



WESTMINSTER  
SCHOOL

**The Challenge**  
Core Paper

# **GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY**

**Syllabus and Guidance**  
First Examination 2027

## **Introduction**

The Geography and History Challenge Paper is designed to assess intellectual curiosity, critical thinking, analytical skills and the ability to construct well-reasoned arguments. It is not intended to reward extensive factual knowledge or specific preparation of particular topics.

The paper is divided into two sections and lasts one hour.

## **Structure of the Paper**

### **Section A: Source and Data Analysis (25 marks) - Geography**

This section assesses a candidate's ability to interpret, analyse and evaluate a range of geographical sources and information.

Candidates may be asked to work with:

- Maps
- Graphs and charts
- Photographs
- Newspaper extracts
- Historical sources
- Statistical data
- Contemporary case studies

Questions will typically require candidates to:

- Identify patterns and trends
- Interpret evidence from sources
- Apply geographical understanding to unfamiliar situations
- Suggest from their knowledge causes and consequences
- Consider different viewpoints
- Make supported judgements

The focus is on reasoning and analysis rather than recall of factual knowledge. Candidates should be prepared to use evidence from the sources provided and combine this with their own wider understanding and ideas.

## **Section B: Extended Essay (25 marks) - History**

Candidates answer one essay question from a choice of titles.

Essay questions are deliberately broad and open-ended. They are designed to allow candidates to draw upon:

- Their school studies
- Wider reading
- Current affairs
- Personal interests
- Independent thinking

## **What Examiners Are Looking For**

Strong candidates will demonstrate:

### **Intellectual Curiosity**

An interest in the wider world and a willingness to engage thoughtfully with complex issues.

### **Critical Thinking**

The ability to question assumptions, recognise alternative viewpoints and evaluate evidence.

### **Analytical Skills**

The ability to identify patterns, make connections and explain relationships between different factors.

### **Use of Evidence**

The ability to support arguments with examples, case studies, historical events, geographical evidence or wider reading.

### **Independent Judgement**

A willingness to develop and justify a personal viewpoint while recognising competing arguments.

### **Clear Communication**

The ability to organise ideas logically and express them clearly in accurate written English.

### **Advice for Candidates**

- Read sources carefully and use evidence to support your answers.
- Explain your reasoning fully.
- Consider more than one side of an argument.
- Use examples where appropriate.
- Do not worry if you have not studied a specific topic before.

- Focus on the quality of your thinking rather than the quantity of factual knowledge.
- In the essay, aim to develop a balanced argument before reaching a clear conclusion.

The strongest responses are often those that demonstrate thoughtful engagement with the question, intellectual independence and an ability to connect ideas from different areas of learning.