

**ANSWER KEY & MARKING SCHEME · CBSE CLASS 11****Geography as a Discipline**

Geography · Chapter 1 · Use this with the Board Paper · Companion to Quick Drill

**HOW TO USE**

Attempt the Board Paper first (closed-book, full time). Then come here. For 2-mark+ questions, compare your answer to the model. For 3-4 mark questions, also consult the **Topper Templates** below — these show the exact step-by-step structure that scores full marks per CBSE marking-scheme conventions.

**MODEL ANSWERS · BOARD PAPER****Section A — Very Short Answer (1 mark each, 4 Qs)****Q1. Define geography in one sentence. [1 mark]**

**Ans:** Geography is the science of spatial attributes — it studies where phenomena are located on the earth's surface, why they are there, and how they are interrelated.

**Q2. Who is regarded as the founder of the systematic approach to geography? [1 mark]**

**Ans:** Alexander von Humboldt.

**Q3. Name the branch of physical geography that studies landforms. [1 mark]**

**Ans:** Geomorphology.

**Q4. Name the three main branches of geography. [1 mark]**

**Ans:** Physical Geography, Human Geography, and Biogeography.

**Section B — Short Answer I (2 marks each, 3 Qs)****Q5. What four questions does a geographer ask about any phenomenon? [2 marks]**

**Ans:** A geographer asks: (i) WHAT the phenomenon is, (ii) WHERE it is located, (iii) WHY it is there (its causes and processes), and (iv) HOW it interacts with other phenomena and how it should be managed. The 'why there' and 'how it relates' questions make geography an explanatory science rather than a mere description of places.

**Q6. Name the four sub-branches of physical geography. [2 marks]**

**Ans:** (i) Geomorphology — study of landforms and the processes that shape them; (ii) Climatology — study of the atmosphere, weather and climate; (iii) Hydrology — study of water bodies (oceans, rivers, groundwater); (iv) Soil Geography / Pedology — study of the formation and distribution of soils.

**Q7. Why is biogeography placed at the interface of physical and human geography? [2 marks]**

**Ans:** Biogeography studies the spatial distribution of living things — plants (plant geography), animals (zoogeography) and their relationships with the environment (ecology), including humans as biological beings. Because life depends on the physical environment yet is also shaped and altered by human activity, biogeography links the physical and the human branches, sitting at their interface.

**Section C — Short Answer II (3 marks each, 3 Qs)****Q8. Distinguish between the systematic approach and the regional approach to geography, naming the founder of each. [3 marks]**

**Ans:** Systematic approach: one phenomenon (e.g. climate or population) is studied across the whole earth to find general patterns — founded by Alexander von Humboldt. Regional approach: one region is studied in its totality, examining all its physical and human features together — founded by Karl Ritter. In short, systematic = one theme over all places; regional = one place across all themes. The two are complementary, not contradictory.

**Q9. Explain why geography is considered both a natural science and a social science. [3 marks]**

**Ans:** Geography studies both the physical environment and human society over space. Its physical branches — geomorphology, climatology, hydrology and soil geography — use the observational and analytical methods of the natural sciences. Its human branches — population, settlement, economic and political

geography — use the methods of the social sciences. Because it integrates the study of nature and society spatially, geography belongs to both families and is rightly called both a natural and a social science.

**Q10. Explain the dualism in geography. What is meant by a dichotomy? [3 marks]**

**Ans:** Dualism means the discipline has been divided along two main lines: (i) physical geography vs human geography, and (ii) the systematic approach vs the regional approach. When such a dualism hardens into a rigid either/or split that fragments the subject, it is called a dichotomy. The modern view rejects rigid dichotomies and treats the two sides as complementary aspects of one integrating discipline — physical and human geography together, systematic and regional methods together.

**Section D — Long / Source-Based (5 + 6 marks, 2 Qs)**

**Q11. Explain how geography is an integrating discipline. Support your answer with examples and its links to other subjects. [5 marks]**

**Ans:** Geography is an integrating discipline because it studies the interrelationship between physical phenomena and human phenomena over the earth's surface, synthesising knowledge from both the natural and social sciences. (1) Definition stated. (2) Two-way integration: the physical environment shapes human life — fertile alluvial plains of the Ganga support a dense farming population — while humans in turn modify the physical environment — deforestation and dam-building alter rivers and local climate. (3) Links to sister disciplines: geography draws on geology, meteorology and oceanography (physical side) and economics, sociology and political science (human side), but adds the SPATIAL question — where, and why there — that none of them centres on. (4) Conclusion: geography's unique role is to integrate diverse phenomena spatially, explaining patterns and associations over space that no single specialist discipline studies. This spatial synthesis is geography's own identity, not mere borrowing.

**Q12. Read the passage and answer: 'When studying the Ganga plains, a geographer examines its flat alluvial relief, its monsoon climate, its rivers and fertile soils, and then its dense population, intensive farming, and crowded towns — treating the area as one connected whole. A second geographer instead studies world climate, mapping rainfall and temperature across the entire globe to classify climatic types.' (a) Which approach is the first geographer using, and who founded it? (b) Which approach is the second using, and who founded it? (c) State the key difference between the two approaches in one line. (d) Using the passage, explain how it illustrates geography as an integrating discipline. (e) Name any two branches of geography that the first geographer would draw upon. [6 marks]**

**Ans:** (a) The first geographer uses the REGIONAL approach, founded by Karl Ritter (studying one region — the Ganga plains — in its totality). (b) The second uses the SYSTEMATIC approach, founded by Alexander von Humboldt (studying one theme — climate — across the whole earth). (c) Key difference: regional = one place studied across all themes; systematic = one theme studied over all places. (d) The passage illustrates integration because the first geographer connects physical features (alluvial relief, monsoon climate, rivers, fertile soils) with human features (dense population, intensive farming, crowded towns) as one connected whole — the fertile physical base explaining the dense human settlement. (e) Any two of: geomorphology (relief), climatology (monsoon climate), hydrology (rivers), soil geography (fertile soils), population geography or economic geography (people and farming).

**★ TOPPER TEMPLATE — 5-mark question: 'Explain how geography is an integrating / interdisciplinary discipline.'**

CBSE SQP 2020, 2022; School Annual recurrently

<b>Step 1</b> [1 mark]	<b>Define the claim</b>	Open with the definition: 'Geography is an integrating discipline because it studies the interrelationship between physical phenomena and human phenomena over the earth's surface, synthesising knowledge from both the natural and social sciences.' State the claim before defending it.
<b>Step 2</b> [2 marks]	<b>Show the two-way integration with examples</b>	Give TWO concrete examples of physical-human integration. e.g. (i) The fertile alluvial plains (physical) explain the dense population of the Ganga valley (human). (ii) Human activity (deforestation, dam-building) in turn modifies climate and rivers (physical). Integration runs both ways — say so explicitly.
<b>Step 3</b> [1 mark]	<b>Link to sister disciplines</b>	Note that geography draws on geology, meteorology, economics, sociology and ecology — but adds the SPATIAL dimension (where and why there) that none of them centres on. This is the 'integrating' identity, not borrowing.
<b>Step 4</b> [1 mark]	<b>Conclude with the spatial synthesis</b>	Close: 'Thus geography's unique role is to integrate diverse phenomena spatially — explaining patterns and associations over space that no single specialist discipline studies.' A strong one-line conclusion earns the final mark.

**COMMON LOSS OF MARKS:**

- Listing other subjects without showing HOW geography integrates them spatially.
- Giving only physical-affects-human examples and forgetting the human-affects-physical direction.
- No definition at the start — examiners reward a clear opening statement of the claim.

**★ TOPPER TEMPLATE — 3-mark question: 'Distinguish between the systematic and regional approaches to geography. Name their founders.'**

CBSE SQP 2022; School Annual 2021, 2022

<b>Step 1</b> [1 mark]	<b>Define the systematic approach + founder</b>	'In the SYSTEMATIC approach, one element / phenomenon (e.g. climate, soil, or population) is studied across the whole world to identify its general patterns. It was advocated by Alexander von Humboldt.' Always pair the approach with its founder.
<b>Step 2</b> [1 mark]	<b>Define the regional approach + founder</b>	'In the REGIONAL approach, a region (a country, a state, or any defined area) is studied as a whole, examining all its physical and human characteristics together. It was advocated by Karl Ritter.'
<b>Step 3</b> [1 mark]	<b>State the key contrast in one line</b>	Sharpen the distinction: 'Systematic = one theme studied over all places; Regional = one place studied across all themes. The two are complementary, not contradictory.' This explicit contrast secures the third mark.

**COMMON LOSS OF MARKS:**

- Reversing the founders (Humboldt = systematic, Ritter = regional) — a frequent and costly slip.
- Describing the two approaches but never stating the crisp 'one theme / one place' contrast.
- Forgetting to name the founders at all when the question explicitly asks for them.

**★ TOPPER TEMPLATE — 5-mark question: 'Describe the branches of geography on the basis of the systematic approach.'**

CBSE SQP 2019, 2021; common at school level

<b>Step 1</b> [1 mark]	<b>State the three main branches</b>	Open: 'On the basis of the systematic approach, geography has three principal branches — Physical Geography, Human Geography, and Biogeography — the last sitting at the interface of the first two.'
<b>Step 2</b> [2 marks]	<b>Detail Physical Geography's sub-branches</b>	List and one-line-define the four sub-branches: Geomorphology (landforms and the processes shaping them), Climatology (atmosphere, weather and climate), Hydrology (water bodies — oceans, rivers, groundwater), and Soil Geography / Pedology (soil formation and distribution). Naming all four earns full marks here.
<b>Step 3</b> [1 mark]	<b>Outline Human Geography's sub-branches</b>	Mention the key sub-branches: population, settlement, economic, political, and cultural / social geography. A short illustrative list is enough at this level.
<b>Step 4</b> [1 mark]	<b>Place Biogeography and conclude</b>	'Biogeography — plant geography, zoogeography and ecology — studies the distribution of life and links physical to human geography.' Conclude that all branches together make geography an integrating discipline.

**COMMON LOSS OF MARKS:**

- Listing only Physical and Human geography and forgetting Biogeography as the third main branch.
- Naming sub-branches without the one-line definition that examiners look for.
- Confusing systematic-approach branches with regional-approach branches (regional, regional planning, regional development).

**MARKING SCHEME — GENERAL NOTES**

- Conceptual answers earn full marks only with definition + explanation + example; a definition alone usually caps at half marks.
- For 'systematic vs regional', the founder name is worth marks — reversing Humboldt and Ritter loses them.
- For 'integrating discipline', both directions of integration (physical→human AND human→physical) are expected for full marks.
- For 'branches', naming the branch without a one-line description caps the mark; name + one-liner earns full credit.
- Source-based answers must use the passage — generic answers that ignore the given text are penalised.