

# Task and Instructions for the Term Paper

## Task description

Write a term research paper about the physical geography of some region of Australia. The length of the paper should be around 2,500-3,000 substantive words. The word count is considered from the first word of the introduction to the last word of the conclusion. It excludes the cover page, abstract, contents page, reference page and appendices. It includes in-text references and direct quotations.

The paper should conform to the general style for research papers as is illustrated in the 'model paper' – *The Physical Geography of Cape York Peninsula, Queensland*.

The *Guide to Term Papers* gives you details on what to do for this assignment and how to get started on it. We won't repeat it at here, but you should take care to read that material.

The 'model paper' and its associated commentary gives further examples of how to write your paper in the appropriate style.

In doing Assignment 1, you should have selected a region that you might have chosen for the term paper assignment, and identified a number of sources that might be useful for the term paper.

You need to describe region's patterns, and if possible, interpret the processes that made them that way, the 5 elements of the physical geography of your region:

- geology
- climate
- landforms
- soils
- biogeography

In your paper, you should collect relevant information and demonstrate that you not only understand the geography of each of the element but also the interrelation among them in the region.

The best papers will not only describe what's in their region with regards to these elements, but also will explain why these are the way they are, addressing the processes that have made them that way. Try to keep your 'content' to focus on *the physical geography of your region, and avoid more generalised information that may not help to describe or explain why your region is the way that it is.*

Illustrate your paper with maps, diagrams, photos, and other visuals (e.g., tables, charts). Cite your sources for these. 'Copy-and-paste' from other sources is fine: just be sure to cite the sources in-text in the Harvard style and to give the full reference for each in the work-cited bibliography.

Note that the sequence that we've followed in studying these in this term is not accidental, and that your paper should follow that sequence also.

## The region of study

*Making a good choice yourself is part of the assignment.*

Generally, if you can find a number of good sources (at least 6, preferably 10 or more) to use – and to cite – in writing your term papers, then you have made an appropriate choice and can proceed with that region in some confidence that you should be able to do a good job on this assignment.

Of course, you can always contact the Course Coordinator to discuss your assignment; just don't expect him to pick your topic for you!

There's no practical limit to the number of areas that might be chosen. You can define your own region as you like.

The general advice is to choose larger areas rather than smaller ones.

In this way you can use small-scale maps (ones that show large areas, such as all of Australia on an A-4 sized sheet), and still find information about your area.

Very small areas (there are some exceptions, such as for Fraser Island and the Daintree), should be avoided as it is harder to get information about small areas. You have a very substantial range of regions to choose from for this assignment: pick a region that seems interesting to you.

For example, you could write a paper about any one of the following:

- Cape York
- Gulf Country
- Wet Tropics (Cairns region)
- Sandstone Belt of Central Queensland
- Channel Country
- Simpson Desert
- Mt. Isa region
- Sunshine Coast (or Gold Coast) and hinterland
- Darling Downs
- Fraser Island
- New England/Granite Belt
- Southern Highlands (Snowy Mts. and Victorian Alps)
- Riverina
- Gippsland
- Southwestern Tasmania
- 'Red Centre' (Alice Springs district-Uluru region)
- Arnhem Land
- The Kimberleys
- Nullarbor Plain
- Gibson (Victorian, Great Sandy--there's many to choose from!) Desert
- Port Campbell region of Victoria

- The Grampians region
- The Flinders Ranges area
- The Pilbara
- Southwestern Western Australia
- etc.

Many previous students chose to study the physical geography of Great Barrier Reef region. I won't generally recommend because some elements of physical geography of the region, e.g soils are not easy to be discussed.

After you make preliminary choices, you should start to find relevant information in the region. Start your search from Google, Wikipedia and library sources. If you can find some sources – especially good library sources, such as books, atlases, Australian encyclopaedias, quality websites (e.g., Australian Bureau of Meteorology, Geoscience Australia, Environment Australia) or journal articles, that can inform you about studying that area.

If you are having trouble finding enough good sources, consult with a Librarian for assistance.

Alternatively, try another region.

However, do not expect to be able to find a single book that will tell you everything that you need to know about your area. Indeed, you may be lucky to find a book that is focussed on your region at all.

As mentioned before, the larger regions are more likely to have a greater range of sources available, and that basic print sources, such as general books on the physical geography of Australia (and others on its geology, weather and climate, landforms, soils, and flora and fauna) are more likely to be readily available to you.

General sources, such as the *Atlas of Australian Resources* (for all of Australia) is excellent as this kind of sources have maps and associated information about each of the five elements of the physical geography of your area that you must cover in your paper.

*It is strongly recommended that you start early and do not leave your research effort until late in the term.*

There are increasing numbers of good websites that have information or other resources (e.g., maps and other images) that you can use for your assignment. Feel free to use quality web sources, just be sure to cite them properly using the Harvard system (see *Referencing Guide*).

Some of the websites that I can recommend to you include:

- Geoscience Australia (free downloadable maps, plus topographic and geological maps and satellite imagery)
- Australian Bureau of Meteorology (climate and weather)
- Australian Natural Resources Atlas (Australian landforms, vegetation and soils)
- Google Earth (satellite imagery)
- Google Images (downloadable maps, photos, diagrams and other images)

Sources such as these can provide information about the five elements of the physical geography of virtually any region within Australia.

## What your Term paper should look like?

- 1) Title page. This paper should include a descriptive title and information of student name, student no. unit code, name of unit coordinator, word count, due date etc.
- 2) Introduction should give it a heading and include the 3 (or 4) components of an introduction that are explained and illustrated in the *Guide to Term Papers*.
- 3) Define your area of study –may reword it from your research proposal. I would expect to see a map here.
- 4) Main bodies (DO NOT USE ‘MAIN BODY’ AS SUBHEADING FOR THIS SECTION)

### A. Geology

- here you should say what rocks your area is composed of – diagrams or images are always good to have.
- here you should tell me why and when the geology became what it is – diagrams or maps are always good to have.

### B. Climate

- here you should tell me what type of climate exists in your area. The Koppen system or Modified Koppen system is a good choice –Graphs or charts are good here (Rainfall, temperature).
- here you should tell me why your area has this type of climate. The geographic position of the region may be a clue here.

### C. Geomorphology

- here you should describe what the landscape looks like –any photograph, copy, or any other Figures or Tables would be good.
- here you should tell me how the landscape got like this –using some geographical terminologies if you understand it.

### D. Soils

- here you should tell me what type of soils exist here –a map is always good.
- here you should tell me why these types of soil exist here –factors affected the soil formation such as geology, climate, or other factors etc.

### E. Biogeography

- here you should tell me what kind of biomes exists and what dominant plants and animals live there – any photograph, copy, or any other Figures or Tables would be good.
- here you should tell me why you would find this type of biogeography there.

- 5) Conclusion should give it a heading and include the 3 components of a conclusion that are explained in the *Guide to Term Papers*.
- 6) You must use in-text citations in your paper and provide full details of the references at the end of the paper.

Please see the 'model paper' and its 'commentary' as further illustration of some of these features of well-written papers.

Good English expression, including well-written paragraphs, objective writing style, spelling, capitalisation, punctuation, and sentence structure is expected. This should include page numbers, and sensible use of fonts (e.g Time New Roman and Arial), font size (12 point is recommended for the basic text of the paper).