

# How to write an evaluation



## Assessment of evaluation

Students working in Band 5 will show evidence of ...

- Highly effective evaluation of the knowledge and understanding gained from field observation
- Perceptive evaluation of each stage of the fieldwork investigation, including the ethical dimensions of the field research
- Perceptive and well-considered reflections for further research and extension of their geographical understanding
- Considered improvements suggested pertinent to the investigation.

## What is Band 5 evaluation like?

- Did your research provide evidence that helped you understand the concept, theory, process or model that underpinned your NEA? If not, why not?

Did you ask the right research questions? If not, you could suggest different research questions that would have improved your investigation.

- Effective evaluation would be balanced – you should be able to identify strengths and weaknesses.

Highly effective evaluation of the knowledge and understanding gained from field observation

## What is Band 5 evaluation like?

- A great evaluation will reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of **each stage** of the research.

Keep notes throughout the investigation of what went well and what could have been improved.

- Have you identified the **ethical dimensions** of your research? How did you mitigate against causing ethical issues such as offending participants?

This will be particularly relevant in human geography investigations. You must show that you are aware of potential ethical issues that are relevant to **your** investigation.

Perceptive evaluation of each stage of the fieldwork investigation including the ethical dimensions of the field research

## What is Band 5 evaluation like?

- Did you reflect on how your research could be extended? If so, can you justify these suggestions? Are your suggestions feasible?

A great report will make sensible suggestions for further research. Think about questions that were left unanswered by your research. Conclusions are often tentative because the evidence that is collected is rarely clear-cut.

Perceptive and well considered reflections for further research and extension of their geographical understanding

## What is Band 5 evaluation like?

- Have you considered how your research could have been improved or done differently? You should be able to justify these suggestions using specific evidence from your experience of research.

Use the limitations of your research to suggest improvements. Often investigations could have been improved with better planning at the outset, so focus on:

- your understanding of the literature
- your choice of research questions
- the scale of your investigation
- the decisions you made when you designed your sampling strategy.

Considered improvements suggested pertinent to the investigation

## Key terminology

Great evaluation makes effective use of key terms:

**Accuracy** – Has the research used precise methods so that the data that has been collected is close to real or original values?

**Reliability** – Has the research used methods that generates consistent results?

**Validity** – Is the evidence that has been collected relevant to the investigation and its aims?



## Great evaluation is direct

Words such as 'helpful' or 'useful' can be used when evaluating the investigation, but a great evaluation will use more direct language – as shown below.

	Words that describe a positive aspect of your fieldwork	Words that describe a negative aspect of your fieldwork
Significant	Strength	Limitation
Substantial	Advantage	Disadvantage
Serious	Benefit	Weakness
Major	Opportunity	Obstacle
Minor	Merit	Challenge
Partial	Success	Failure

Use these words to indicate relative importance, for example 'minor limitation' or 'major strength'.

# Use evidence to support evaluation

When I sampled housing in Shrewsbury, I used random number tables to choose locations on an OS map.

One issue is that OS maps are sometimes out-of-date.

A major limitation of my sampling strategy was that the Darwin's Walk housing estate was so new it wasn't on the OS map, so I didn't sample it.

This is description which provides useful context. It's nice and concise.

This is a generic evaluation. We don't learn anything about the actual fieldwork.

This evaluation is better because 'major limitation' is an explicit evaluative point. It also uses evidence from an actual piece of fieldwork to support the evaluation.

## Avoid generic evaluation

Avoid making generic statements about the advantages or disadvantages of research techniques unless they can be applied to specific aspects of your investigation.

“One advantage of a digital survey is that it is quicker than face-to-face.”

This may be true, but if the student has used a face-to-face survey this is an example of generic evaluation.

It might become relevant if the student has identified that a digital survey could have been an improvement to their investigation.

## Avoid generic evaluation

Here is another example:

“One problem with questionnaires is you don’t know if people are being honest.”

Again, there is some truth in this statement. However, unless the student has evidence that people avoided answering some questions honestly, it is a generic statement.

It could be made into a specific evaluative comment if the student considered how the questions in the questionnaire could have been amended to make the survey more reliable.