

Edexcel (A) Economics A-level

Exam technique: A-level Papers

A-level Economics has three exam papers, each is marked out of 100 and is 2 hours long. Paper 1 and 2 have the same format: Section A, multiple choice and short answer questions, Section B, data response questions, and Section C, an essay-style question. Paper 1 tests your know of microeconomics, Theme 1 and Theme 3, whilst Paper 2 tests macroeconomics, Theme 2 and Theme 4. Paper 3 has a Section A and Section B, both with data response questions with the same format. This is a synoptic paper and tests all four themes.

Papers One and Two

Section A: (25 marks, 25 minutes)

- 5 questions worth 5 marks each
- Includes calculations, multiple choice and short answer questions
- Use the data/text in your answer
- Look out for keywords, such as explain, calculate and define
- Be careful of units
- Read graphs carefully.

Section B: (50 marks, 60 minutes)

Questions in this section are marked using KAAE (Knowledge, Application, Analysis and Evaluation), with a certain number of marks allocated to each skill. Higher level questions also rely on marking grids.

Spend 5 to 10 minutes at the start reading through the case studies. Remember to apply to this throughout and read them carefully. The majority of the answers will be found within the case study.

5 mark question- Explain/calculate

- KAA- no evaluation!
- Define/identify factors. Apply to the text and analyse
- If you can, use a diagram and explain it

8 mark question- Examine

- KAAE- 2 marks for each, so write 2 KAA paragraphs with evaluation
- Identify two factors/reasons and use definitions
- Use data from the extract to back up points
- Use chains of analysis to explain
- Use a diagram if possible
- State two evaluation points or explain one more thorough point

10 mark question- Assess

- KAAE- 2,2,2 and 4
- Requires deeper evaluation than in the 8 marker, use 2 more thorough pieces of evaluation and application can help to evaluate
- This is the first question marked by levels shown below:

Level	Mark	Descriptor
	0	A completely inaccurate response.
Level 1	1–2	Displays isolated or imprecise knowledge and understanding of terms, concepts, theories and models. Use of generic or irrelevant information or examples. Descriptive approach which has no link between causes and consequences.
Level 2	3–4	Displays elements of knowledge and understanding of economic principles, concepts and theories. Applies economic ideas and relates them to economic problems in context, although does not focus on the broad elements of the question. A narrow response or the answer may lack balance.
Level 3	5–6	Demonstrates accurate knowledge and understanding of the concepts, principles and models. Ability to link knowledge and understanding in context using relevant and focused examples which are fully integrated. Economic ideas are applied appropriately to the broad elements of the question.

Level	Mark	Descriptor
	0	No evaluative comments.
Level 1	1–2	Identification of generic evaluative comments without supporting evidence/ reference to context. No evidence of a logical chain of reasoning.
Level 2	3–4	Evaluative comments supported by relevant reasoning and appropriate reference to context. Evaluation recognises different viewpoints and/or is critical of the evidence.

12 mark question- Discuss

- KAAE- 2,2,4 and 4
- Requires depth of evaluation and analysis
- Use 2 KAA points with detailed analysis and evaluation
- Good to use diagrams- helps with analysis

Level	Mark	Descriptor
	0	A completely inaccurate response.
Level 1	1–2	Displays isolated or imprecise knowledge and understanding of terms, concepts, theories and models. Use of generic or irrelevant information or examples. Descriptive approach which has no chains of reasoning or links between causes and consequences.
Level 2	3–5	Displays elements of knowledge and understanding of economic principles, concepts and theories. Applies economic ideas and relates them to economic problems in context, although does not focus on the broad elements of the question. A narrow response; chains of reasoning are developed but the answer may lack balance.
Level 3	6–8	Demonstrates accurate knowledge and understanding of the concepts, principles and models. Ability to link knowledge and understanding in context using relevant and focused examples which are fully integrated. Economic ideas are carefully selected and applied appropriately to economic issues and problems. The answer demonstrates logical and coherent chains of reasoning.

Level	Mark	Descriptor
	0	No evaluative comments.
Level 1	1–2	Identification of generic evaluative comments without supporting evidence/reference to context. No evidence of a logical chain of reasoning.
Level 2	3–4	Evaluative comments supported by relevant reasoning and appropriate reference to context. Evaluation recognises different viewpoints and/or is critical of the evidence.

15 mark question- Discuss

- KAAE- 3,3,3,6
- 3 KAA paragraphs with 3 detailed evaluation points
- Same as a 10 marker- but with 3 points rather than 2

Level	Mark	Descriptor
	0	A completely inaccurate response.
Level 1	1–3	Displays isolated or imprecise knowledge and understanding of terms, concepts, theories and models. Use of generic or irrelevant information or examples. Descriptive approach which has no chains of reasoning or links between causes and consequences.
Level 2	4–6	Displays elements of knowledge and understanding of economic principles, concepts and theories. Applies economic ideas and relates them to economic problems in context, although does not focus on the broad elements of the question. A narrow response; chains of reasoning are developed but the answer may lack balance.
Level 3	7–9	Demonstrates accurate knowledge and understanding of the concepts, principles and models. Ability to link knowledge and understanding in context using relevant and focused examples which are fully integrated. Economic ideas are carefully selected and applied appropriately to economic issues and problems. The answer demonstrates logical and coherent chains of reasoning.

Level	Mark	Descriptor
	0	No evaluative comments.
Level 1	1–2	Identification of generic evaluative comments without supporting evidence/reference to context. No evidence of a logical chain of reasoning.
Level 2	3–4	Evidence of evaluation of alternative approaches which is unbalanced. Evaluative comments with supporting evidence/reference to context and a partially-developed chain of reasoning.
Level 3	5–6	Evaluative comments supported by relevant chain of reasoning and appropriate reference to context. Evaluation recognises different viewpoints and/or is critical of the evidence.

Section C: (25 marks, 35 minutes)**25 mark question- Evaluate**

- Choice of two questions- pick the one you can answer best
- This is marked in levels, but it is important to include all four skills: knowledge, application, analysis and evaluation
- Own knowledge is key for application, for example UK context, developing countries and examples
- Judgement is key in getting the top marks
- Diagrams are useful in explaining points and helping with analysis
- Structure and depth of both analysis and evaluation
- Use definitions to display knowledge
- Try to apply and evaluate all points

Knowledge, application and analysis		
Level	Mark	Descriptor
	0	A completely inaccurate response.
Level 1	1–4	Displays isolated or imprecise knowledge and understanding of terms, concepts, theories and models. Use of generic or irrelevant information or examples. Descriptive approach which has no chains of reasoning or links between causes and consequences.
Level 2	5–8	Displays elements of knowledge and understanding of economic principles, concepts and theories. Applies economic ideas and relates them to economic problems in context, although does not focus on the broad elements of the question. A narrow response or superficial, two stage chains of reasoning only.
Level 3	9–12	Demonstrates accurate knowledge and understanding of the concepts, principles and models. Ability to apply economic concepts and relate them directly to the broad elements of the question with evidence integrated into the answer. Analysis is clear and coherent, although it may lack balance. Chains of reasoning are developed but the answer may lack balance.
Level 4	13–16	Demonstrates precise knowledge and understanding of the concepts, principles and models. Ability to link knowledge and understanding in context using appropriate examples. Analysis is relevant and focused with evidence fully and reliably integrated. Economic ideas are carefully selected and applied appropriately to economic issues and problems. The answer demonstrates logical and coherent chains of reasoning.

Evaluation		
Level	Mark	Descriptor
	0	No evaluative comments.
Level 1	1–3	Identification of generic evaluative comments without supporting evidence/reference to context. No evidence of a logical chain of reasoning.
Level 2	4–6	Evidence of evaluation of alternative approaches which is unbalanced leading to unsubstantiated judgements. Evaluative comments with supporting evidence/reference to context and a partially-developed chain of reasoning.
Level 3	7–9	Evaluative comments supported by relevant reasoning and appropriate reference to context. Evaluation recognises different viewpoints and is critical of the evidence provided and/or the assumptions underlying the analysis enabling informed judgements to be made.

Paper Three

Section A and B both contain a 5 mark, an 8 mark and a 12 mark which are answered in the same way as in Paper One and Two. Both sections also contain a choice from two 25 markers: these are the synoptic questions which require use of both microeconomics and macroeconomic. There are no multiple choice or short answer questions in paper three. Both microeconomics and macroeconomics can be used in the 5, 8 and 12 mark questions, but it is not necessary to include both. An hour should be spent on each section, spending around 35 minutes on the 25 marker.

25 mark synoptic question:

- Choice of two questions- pick the one you can answer best, remembering you need to bring in both micro and macro elements
- Microeconomic points include: consumer and producer surplus; price and output; revenues, costs and profits; impact on individual groups e.g. consumers, firms; market failure; market structures.
- Macroeconomic points include: the impact on key economic indicators (employment, economic growth, inflation and the balance of payments); poverty levels; the government budget, spending or taxation; monetary policy; poverty and inequality; development; financial markets
- Application can come from the case study, as this is still a data response question, but you should also use your own knowledge if you can.
- Other than this, this question is similar to the 25 mark question in papers one and two. It is marked in levels and requires all four economic skills.

Knowledge, application and analysis		
Level	Mark	Descriptor
	0	A completely inaccurate response.
Level 1	1–4	Displays ability to apply knowledge in context but will focus on small range of elements. Demonstrates understanding by identifying relevant information. Demonstrates knowledge and understanding of terms, concepts, theories and models.
Level 2	5–8	Shows ability to apply economic ideas and relate them to economic problems in context. Displays knowledge and understanding of economic principles, concepts and theories to make limited analysis or narrow analysis.
Level 3	9–12	Analysis is clear and coherent with evidence well integrated, although may focus on some of the broad elements of the question more than others. Shows ability to apply economic ideas and relate them directly to the broad elements in the question.
Level 4	13 - 16	Analysis is relevant, clear and coherent with evidence fully and reliably integrated. Economic ideas are carefully selected and applied appropriately to economic issues and problems covering both microeconomic and macroeconomic effects. A clear understanding of economic principles, concepts, theories and arguments.

Evaluation		
Level	Mark	Descriptor
	0	No evaluative comments.
Level 1	1–3	Identification of evaluative comments without explanation.
Level 2	4 – 6	Evaluative comments with limited explanations. Evidence of evaluation of alternative approaches which is generic or unbalanced leading to limited judgements.
Level 3	7 – 9	Evaluative comments supported by relevant reasoning and appropriate reference to the context. Evaluation recognises different viewpoints and is critical of the evidence provided and/or the assumptions underlying the analysis enabling informed judgements to be made.