

Skills: Describing and explaining

We have discovered that a level 3 answer will demonstrate particular **skills**. Remember what the table highlighted regarding skill:

"The candidate will display a high level of ability through **insightful analysis** and **interpretation** of the resource material with little or no gaps, errors or misapprehensions. **All that is significant is extracted** from the resource material."

One of the core skills of a Geographer is his or her ability to look at features or processes in the world and answer two questions: **what is going on (description/analysis)** and **why (explanation/interpretation)?**

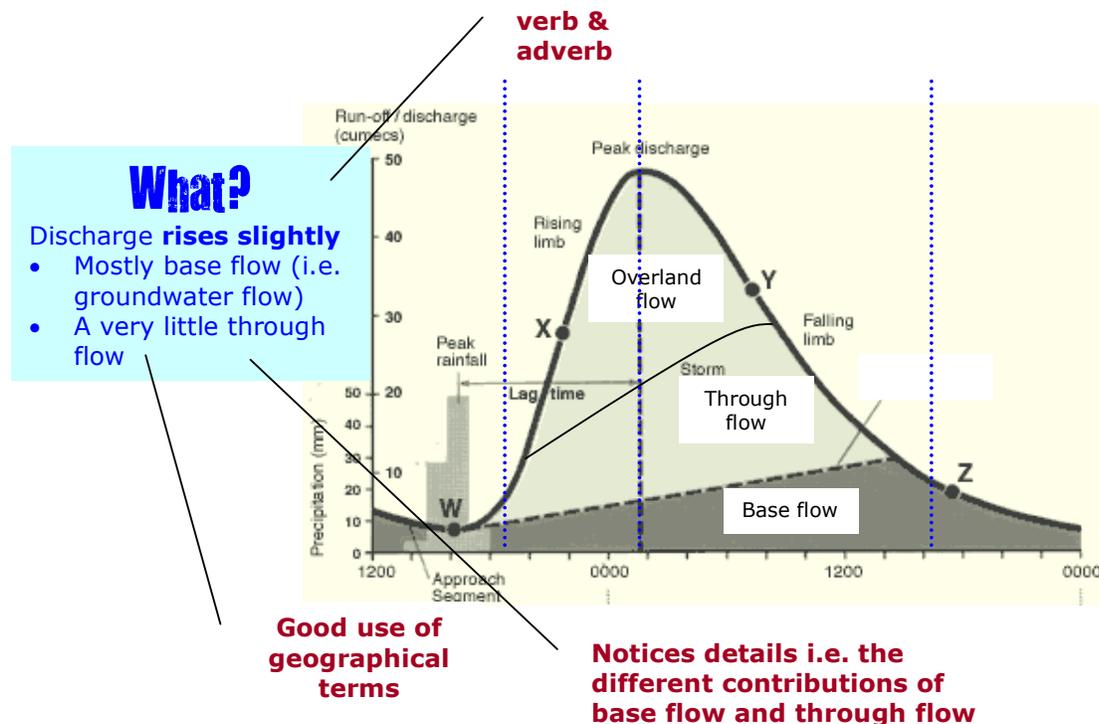
LEARNING OUTCOME: The following notes will help highlight what you need to include for a top level AS description and explanation.

What does a good description look like?

- A good description of a process will include :
 - **a verb** = eg rises, falls
 - **an adverb** = eg slowly, very rapidly
- A good description will also not be content with a general overall description, but will **notice details**.
- A good description will make **include geographical terms** as appropriate.

For example, a quick description of the graph below would say, 'The discharge goes up and then down again'.

But an AS level description will go much further. Read the annotation carefully to see how it embraces the principles outlined above.



Note: sometimes you will not be able to simplify your description down to just one single adverb. For example, the 3rd stage could be described as 'discharge falls slightly more slowly than it rose'. But the basic principle is the same: we need more than a simple verb.

What does a good explanation look like?

- It will show good **understanding** of the processes at work
- It will be clearly related to the points you uncovered in your description
- It will use suitable **geographical terms**

Read the following explanation for the first part of the storm hydrograph, noting how the explanation does all three things mentioned above.

Why?

- b/c most rain does NOT fall directly into the channel; rather it goes through a series of processes, eg **interception, stem flow, infiltration, through flow** etc,
- all of these TAKE TIME.
- So there is little through flow at this stage b/c there has not been enough time for it to reach the channel yet.

Uses geog terms

shows understanding of key concept

clearly related to points made in description

What?

Discharge **rises slowly**

- Mostly base flow (i.e. groundwater flow)
- A very little through flow

