FIELD WORK STUDY.

Fieldwork refers to a practical part of Geography done away from the class where the local environment is used as a laboratory.

It involves the observation, recording, analysis and interpretation of various geographical information collected in the field.

STAGES OF CARRYING OUT FIELDWORK.

1. Preparatory stage.
2. Fieldwork stage.
3. Follow up stage.

PREPARATORY STAGE.

These are activities co-ordinated before carrying out actual fieldwork. These include the following.

1. Carrying out a pilot study to access the feasibility of the study. It is the first visit to the area of study i.e. seeking permission from relevant authorities.
2. Formulating the topic of study which is done basing on the information gathered from the pilot study. The topic should reflect what is to be studied, where the study is to take place and geographical relationship i.e. it should be researchable and precise e.g. **The growth and development of Nsambya market and its influence on the surrounding areas in Makindye division, Kampala district.**
3. Formulating the objectives of the study. These objectives should be clear, specific, measurable and achievable. Objectives should be related to the topic but not repetition of the topic. When we are stating objectives we should use the following terms;

- To find out……
- To identify…..
- To examine……
- To suggest……

N:B

The following words should not be used.

- To know….
- To understand….
- To learn…..
- To appreciate……

All objectives must obtain the name of the area of study e.g.

- To find out the geographical location of Nsambya market.
- To find out the factors that have led to the development of Nsambya market.

4. Selection of the methods. After stating the objectives, methods are selected, they show how information is connected, they include observation, interviewing etc.
5. Identification and collection of the equipment, tools to be used in the field e.g. stationary, cameras, binoculars etc.
6. Seeking for permission from the school.
7. Organising transport, depending on where the study is to take place.
8. Departure.

Revision questions.

I. Explain the pre-field activities you carried out before going for actual fieldwork.
II. How do you organize for actual fieldwork?
N;B; These questions require the above information.

REAL FIELDWORK

This is a stage where methods of data collection are applied.These methods include; observation, sampling, interviewing, measurements, map orientation, paranomic viewing, documentary, literature, reviews etc.

FOLLOW UP STAGE.

This is the last stage of fieldwork. It involves the steps taken by the researcher after data collection in the field to combat data into a report.

The following activities are done on the collected data in the follow up stage.

a) Presentation of the findings.
b) Organization of data collected.
c) Interpretation of the data collected.
d) Polishing of the stages, lines, tables, graphs, etc.
e) Making conclusions about field work findings.
f) Compiling a report on a fieldwork carried out.
g) Disseminating of a report to different stakeholders.

METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION.

1. **Observation.**

This is the use of the naked eyes to see and identify the geographical phenomenal in the field.

ADVANTAGES OF OBSERVATION.

- ✓ It gives accurate information about what is exactly in the field.
- ✓ It gives firsthand information which helps to reduce bias about different geographical phenomenal.
- ✓ Information gathered can be depended upon with confidence since it is witnessed physically in the field.
- ✓ There is flexibility since the researcher may continue observing and monitoring the information collected.
- ✓ Learning takes much faster compared to other methods of data collection i.e. learning takes place by seeing.
- ✓ It supplements information to other methods since most of the methods depend on observation.
- ✓ Rich data can be generated on a range of topics, issues, aspects which otherwise would have been difficult to study.
- ✓ It yields quick results because it records phenomena as they occur.

DISADVANTAGES OF OBSERVATION.

- ➢ It's costly since one has to travel to the field.
- ➢ The observer is exposed to environmental dangers and accidents.
- ➢ There are obstructions like fog and smoke which affects data collection.
- ➢ Some people are blind and won't use the method to gather information.
- ➢ There is misinterpretation of geographical features.
- ➢ Some places are inaccessible due to flooding, bad weather, wars, remoteness and yet it requires the physical presence of the observer.

- Some historical information i.e. historical background level of income, time of flood cannot be obtained through observation.
- The information collected largely depends on individual performance.
- Some information after being observed, they are shocking e.g. killing and destruction in battle fields, people suffering from dangerous killer diseases.

2. Interviewing.

This is a dialogue between the researcher and respondent through asking of questions and responses about a given topic of study. It involves face to face discussion.

ADVANTAGES OF INTERVIEWING.

- It gives up to date information unlike the written documents.
- It is a fast method of collection of data since the information is got on spot.
- It provides fast hand information from the source.
- It is very easy to get supplementary answers where the answers given are inadequate.
- It is easy to detect individual feelings in the field and judge accordingly.
- Cordial relationships develop between the researcher and interviewer.
- It involves motivational speeches and some jokes between the researcher and interviewer.
- It allows accessing the validity of particular answers.

- It is a more appropriate technique of obtaining information about complex motional subjects.
- Students who are unable to read and write can still answer interview questions.

  N;B; The following should be considered when interviewing.
  - The interviewer should introduce him/herself to the interviewee.
  - The interviewer should be polite to the interviewee.
  - The interviewer should establish whether the interviewee is willing to be or not be interviewed.
  - Questions asked should be clear and straight forward.
  - If the question is not fully answered by the informant, rephrase it to get full answers from the informant.
  - Tge researcher should avoid asking embarrassing questions to the respondent.

3. **Recording.**

   This is the noting down of information obtained during the study on a paper by use of writing materials i.e. pens, pencils, and other modern methods i.e. video recording and photography.

   This information got in the field has to be recorded immediately so as not to be forgotten. Various methods are used to record information that is note taking, paranomic views, transects field sketches, diagrams and mappings.

ADVANTAGES OF RECORDING.

- It is useful for future generation since it is kept for a long time.
- Accurate information can easily be passed.
- It is easy to circulate recorded information to other users.

- It offers information that cannot be obtained by other methods to produce the same information during analysis.

DISADVANTAGES OF RECORDING.

- Some students lack skills of note taking.
- Some information may be skipped during recording where the researcher is slow at noting down data.
- There may not be room for one to sit down to record because the researcher is mobile.

4. Field sketching.

This is a collection and storage of data of drawing physical and manmade features in the area of study.

Sketches drawn include; Sketch maps, line transect panoramas etc.

It involves the use of pens, pencils, papers, and rulers to get the above sketches. Such features include; rivers, mountains, lakes, swamps, and manmade features like; roads, railways, buildings, plantations.

I. Sketch maps.

These are mainly drawn to show the locations of physical and manmade features of the area studied.

They give a clear impression of information about geographical phenomena observed.

A tour should be made before sketch maps are drawn. In this tour, one should identify the distribution of features in this area.

No empty space should be left on this sketch map.

Care should be taken to include all the characteristics of good sketch map i.e. the frame, compass direction, key, physical and human features.

The sketch map should cover an area which is not too big or too small i.e. within 5km radius.

II. Panorama.

This is a sketch showing geographical features down fropm a view point and pictures are drawn I a way they appear to the viewer.

The view point selected is a raised area.

The features within the panoramas are drawn in the way they appear and those which are obstructed are not shown and drawn ever if one knows that they exist.

These features are drawn in certain perspective i.e. those nearer to the viewer are large and the size reduces with increasing distance from the view.

III. Transect drawing/cross section.

It is a method of data collection in which information s gathered and drawn along a line.

It is a cross section of the area studied and this can be from east to west, north to south.

It is drawn appropriately when one walks across a given are, observing and recording changes in relief, altitude, soil depth, vegetation types and other geographical phenomena.

It helps to show various land use partners and physical features along the area of study.

It shows both physical features i.e. relief, vegetation, drainage, soil and human features like roads, railways etc. All the qualities of a good transect must be shown. tittle, frame, etc.

ADVANTAGES OF SKETCHING.

- Information obtained can be kept for a longtime.
- It gives visual image of the pictures which causes quick understanding.
- Sketch maps store information and therefore a special way of recording information.
- Students acquire skills of drawing.
- When interpreted, map potrays environmental inter-relationships i.e. relationship between drainage and settlement, relief and settlement, transport and relief.

DISADVANTAGES OF SKETCHING

- It is tiresome since it involves a lot of time in the field.
- It takes a lot of time hence it is time consuming.
- It exposes the researcher to the likely dangers on the ground since he has to be on real ground while sketching.
- The survey map of the area may be difficult to get.
- It exposes the researcher to the environmental hazards i.e. floods, heavy rains and strong winds.
- Unpredictable changes may hinder the use of the method t collect information e.g. outbreak of epidemic diseases and insecurity.
- It is expensive as it requires various tools to be used e.g. pencils, rubbers, and base maps.

- It may be obstructed by physical features i.e. hilly landscape.

5. **Measuring.**

   This is the establishment of weights, size, distance, area, and capacities by use of calibrated instruments i.e. ruler, tape measures and non-calibrated instruments e.g. cups, basins and tins.

   It is used to determine e.g. size of the market, distance from one point to another, width of the road.

ADVANTAGES OF MEASUREMENT METHOD.

- It provides accurate information.
- Some measurement methods are cheap and easy to use .
- It's an efficient way of getting information.

DISDVANTAGES OF MEASUREMENT METTHOD.

- Some measuring instruments are expensive.
- It's time consuming i.e. tape measures.

6. **Questionare method.**

   It is a set of pre-pared questions given to the respondent who answers them in writing.

ADVANTAGES OF QUESTIONARE METHOD.

- It eliminates transport costs of the researcher.
- It helps a researcher to obtain information from impenetrable areas i.e. war areas.
- Since there is no direct contact between the researcher and respondent, bias is minimized.
- It gives the respondent enough time to answer the questions.

- It is used to get information from distant placed people.
- It ensures wide geographical coverage as many respondents are given questions.
- It can be posted i.e. mailed or taxed hence time saving.
- It is relatively cheap since the questions can be posted to the respondents.
- It requires no prior arrangement given towards research.

DISADVANTAGES OF QUESTIONARE METHOD.

- It increases cost of the study.
- It becomes a burden sometimes when the potential respondents are sparsely distributed.
- It is time wasting since the respondent might take long to send the feedback to the researcher.
- It can only be used where the respondents are literate since it involves reading and recording.
- Mail questionare may not be supplemented by observation.
- Returning the questionare may be difficult and they may get lost on the way.
- They are suitable only to those who studied where the purpose, topic, content are clear and easy to understand.

7. **Sampling method.**

   This is the technique of data collection in which a small part of the whole is selected to be tested to represent the rest.

   It is done in a number of ways namely;

   - Through random picking of soil samples.
   - Selecting soil from different parts of the area of study i.e. valley, gentle slopes.

- By interviewing a few people from a bigger given information.

8. **Map orientation.**

   This involves rotating a map up to the point where the features on the map tally or match with those on the ground.

   When describing this method, learners should show how the survey map was turned to match with the features on the ground.

   They ought to give evidence of features that are identified on the map and on the ground.

   Names of these features should be identified and directions for both physical and manmade features should be cited.

9. **Documentary review/Analysis of existing documents.**

   This method of data collection involves a researcher to use the already existing data in textbooks, magazines, films, statistical extracts, and secondary resources.

   It involves gathering or collecting data using information that has already been collected by someone else.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE FIELD WORK STUDY.

This is the same as importance of field work in understanding of the geography of the area.

It calls for geographical relationships in the field.

For easy analysis and interpretation, a useful list of themes for field work is given below;

- Physical to physical relationships.
- Physical to human relationships.
- Human to human relationships.

It is expected that you may study all the three relationships as you do field work.

These are guides which will help you to handle fieldwork questions adequately.

Human environment or land use types.

- Agriculture i.e. cultivation and livestock.
- Quarrrying and mining.
- Trade and trading centers and market centers.
- Fish farming or fishing.
- Forestry i.e. lumbering, afforestation.
- Brick laying.
- Transport.

Physical environment.

- Relief features.
- Steep slopes.
- Conical hills.
- Gentle slopes.
- Flat topped hills.
- Relatively flat landscape.
- Low lying areas.
- Cliffs.
- Weather and climate.(temperature, clouds, rainfall)
- Plateau.
- Spurs/interlocking spurs.
- Drainage features(lakes,rivers,streams)
- Soil.
- Vegetation cover.

Example 1.

One may want to establish the influence of **relief and land use types** in the areas of study.

- **Gentle slopes** are usually well drained therefore favour **settlement, transport and farming.**
- **Valleys** facilitate **crop cultivation, brick laying** and **mining** due to the presence of alluvial soils.
- **Steep slopes** facilitate **quarrying, grazing** due to the presence of rocks, pastures and limited settlement.

Physical to physical relationships.

Example 2.

- We observed that the **fertile soils** on **the gentle slopes** of **Bendegere hill** at Kasenyi fish landing site, have facilitated the growth of **thick vegetation** inform of **forests** and **bushes.**
- The swamps in Busega valley are due to water logging.

Physical to human relationships.

Example 3

- We observed that the **rock out crop** on Mutundwe hill has **quarrying activities** because it is made of granite which is ideal for quarrying.
- We observed that the **abundant water and streams** in Wakaliga valley i.e. Wakaliga stream have influenced establishment of **wakaliga fishing bay** as the streams provide water.

Human to human relationships.

Example 4

- We observed **that Sir Albert Cook** has attracted **dense settlement** in the areas i.e. Ivy's hotel because of easy accessibility.
- We observed that the **mustard seed market** has influenced the growth and development of **livestock farms** which sell milk and poultry products to the market.i.e. Kakande poultry farm in Nateete village sells its eggs to Mustard seed market.

  N.B ;
  - Students are expected to identify a relationship and explain using terms like favoured, encouraged, influenced etc.
  - Must give evidence of relationships using local names or compass direction.
  - Discuss each relationship separately i.e. physical to physical, physical to human, human to human.

Similar questions answered using a similar approach.

- To what extent was the field work geographical?
- Explain the geographical findings of the field work.
- Explain how the field work study helped you to understand the area.
- Explain the geographical importance of the field work study.
- What were your conclusions made from the field work study?
- Explain your conclusions made from the field work study.
- Explain the relationship between physical features and human activities in the area.

- Write a report on your field work study.
  When answering these questions, consider at least any four aspects which are different e.g.
  - Vegetation – lumbering activities.
  - Soils - crop cultivation or agriculture.
  - Lakes and rivers - fishing activities.
  - Gentle slopes – Settlement or road construction.
    Avoid repeating specific variables i.e.
  - Relief - settlement.
  - Relief - agriculture.
  - Relief - road construction.
    There is a repetition of relief, hence should consider other variables.
    There are no marks for repeated variables.

THE FOLLOW UP ACTIVITIES.

This requires the student to explain the steps taken after the field work study, activities done by the students and their teachers.

These include;

- ✓ Presentation from different groups.
- ✓ Analysis of the collected data.
- ✓ Representing data inform of sketch maps or diagrams or graphs.
- ✓ Compilation of data obtained for future reference.
- ✓ Comparison of data collected.
- ✓ Polishing up sketches.
- ✓ Conclusion.
- ✓ Recommendations.