# Earth and Space Sciences

## Released form evidence

All five released forms contained 50 slots. January 2026 included a drifting cargo spill, glacial ice and Mount Morris Dam. Ten January clusters included a model word cue, six a graph cue and five a map cue. The June mean graph count was 5.5; August was 7.

One January. A named New York location is a useful practice setting, with little basis for predicting which place will anchor the exam. Distinguish information in a reference table from information in a supplied map.

**Eligible public forms • January 1 / June 2 / August 2**

## Worked responses and follow-up questions

### 1 Read a stream record

Peak recorded discharge was 12 $m^3/s$ at 10. Water takes time to reach the channel and gauge. More pavement can reduce infiltration and speed runoff, producing an earlier or higher peak under otherwise similar conditions.

If rain and peak discharge are treated as simultaneous, trace a drop's route to the gauge.

### 2 Decode a contour crossing

A rise from the west and a descent to the east fit the data. The west flank is steeper because equal elevation changes occur over shorter distances. These crossings alone do not establish an exact summit elevation.

If higher is confused with steeper, compare equal elevation changes over the two distances.

### 3 Use relative time evidence

A deposited, B deposited, dike intruded, erosion truncated B and dike, C deposited. Superposition orders A and B. Cross-cutting and truncation place the dike after B and before the surface beneath C.

If the dike is youngest, ask whether it cuts C or ends below it.

### Average clusters with an explicit word cue per released form

| Feature | January | June | August |
|---|---|---|---|
| map | 5.00 | 3.00 | 5.00 |
| graph | 6.00 | 5.50 | 7.00 |
| model | 10.00 | 9.00 | 8.50 |

A dash marks an unavailable month. Rows can overlap. See seasonal_evidence.csv for counts, uncertainty and the full feature set.

**Official design or administration guidance**

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### 4 Explain a seasonal difference

As Earth orbits with a relatively fixed axis direction, the Northern Hemisphere is tilted toward the Sun in June and has a longer illuminated path. At 43°S it is winter and daylight is shorter. Changing Earth-Sun distance cannot explain opposite seasons.

If distance is central, ask why both hemispheres experience the same distance on a given date.

### 5 Infer motion from paired locations

60 km / 2 million years = 30 km per million years, or 3 cm/year. New crust forms near the ridge and moves outward. Total separation of both plates would be about 6 cm/year.

If 6 cm/year is reported for one plate, distinguish one-sided travel from widening of the whole basin.

### 6 Make a watershed decision

A permeable surface or retention area could slow runoff and increase storage, lowering peak flow. The model connects more rapid runoff with higher peak. Soil saturation, slope or storm intensity could alter the result.

If a student promises flooding will stop, ask which outcome the model measured and under what storm.

## Released practice for each week

**Week 1 2026-01 • Q1 • Evidence for the Big Bang Theory (Q1–5)**
**Question booklet** **Official mapping / guide**

**Week 2 2026-06 • Q9 • The Slow Carbon Cycle (Q9–13)**
**Question booklet** **Official mapping / guide**

**Week 3 2026-08 • Q47 • Stars and Elements in the Universe (Q47–50)**
**Question booklet** **Official mapping / guide**