

# Regions (European) | A1 Sample answer

## Agriculture in the Mezzogiorno

20% of employment in the Mezzogiorno is in agriculture. Approximately 85% of the Mezzogiorno region is either hilly or mountainous. The Apennines mountain range runs through the Italian Peninsula. The mountainous nature of the region makes it difficult for agriculture. It is difficult for heavy machinery to access the region. The Mezzogiorno is also affected by earthquakes and has several fault lines. This causes damage to infrastructure. The soils in the region are very dry. Deforestation and heavy rain leads to severe soil erosion. The climate is Mediterranean.

The daytime temperature varies from 12 degrees in winter to over 30 degrees in the summer. These high temperatures mean that the soil is dry and can be quickly eroded. The average rain in July was 19 millimetres. This leads to poor conditions for grazing and livestock is confined to sheep and goats. The best type of crops are tree crops as trees have deep roots which can reach the water and can grow on slopes. These crops include figs, olives, peaches and plums. After 1950 the Cassa invested in agriculture. Improvements were made which included irrigation. Water was pumped from deep Wells and Rivers to irrigate crops.

The mezzogiorno suffers from absentee landlords. The output on this land is very low. Reform by Cassa meant that these estates were broken up and redistributed. This increased output as farmers were farming their own land. The mountainous nature of the region makes it difficult to build roads especially in the interior. The Autostrada Del Sole runs along the coast and connects the south to central and northern Italy. This allows farmers to sell their goods to these markets. Italy has a market of 21 million. Tourists in the summer provide an additional market.