

Curriculum intent

Ask yourself: ‘am I interested in Geography?’ Places and people are amazing—continually shifting, diverse and fascinating— and Geography helps us cast light on them.

Geography tackles the big issues, including environmental responsibility, global interdependence and cultural understanding and tolerance. Think of a big global issue today: climate change, water pollution, refugee crises, coronavirus, and you will find geography at its heart. Indeed, you only have to watch the news to realise how important geography is at both identifying and managing global issues. There are few subjects that offer as much to deepen your global awareness to the degree that geography does, and there has arguable never been a better time to study this fascinating subject.

Geography is not merely a theoretical discipline, though. Aside from being a relevant, conceptually rigorous course, geography renowned for being highly practical in its nature. With an emphasis on the application of scientific and social knowledge, geography offers an almost unrivalled opportunity to ground subject content in relatable, tangible forms.

The next time you go to the coast, or walk alongside a river, you should go knowing you have a much greater awareness of what is happening: how that landform was created, why management strategies have been put in place, what potential risks and opportunities are posed within this place. Our intention is to foster a deep, inquisitive world view in our students. Introducing them to the diversity and uniqueness of our planet, whilst developing their geographical literacy—the geographical and analytical skills—required to understand geographical phenomena and respond to appropriate stimuli.

From this starting point, the intention of the GCSE geography course is to expose students to relevant, contemporary geographical knowledge, with which they can construct meaning and evolve their value structure and understanding of the world we live in. We are committed to making our geographers more aware, responsible and ethically-minded global citizens.

Throughout their GCSE, the curriculum is delivered through the AQA GCSE Geography course. This specification has been selected for its breadth of content, combining a balanced study of Physical, Human and Environmental Geography, whilst covering a range of places and scales.

During the course, students will learn more about the natural landscape around us and discover the many ways in which humans have influenced it. The core physical modules (the challenge of natural hazards, the living world, UK physical landscapes) are concerned with the dynamic nature of physical processes and systems, and human interaction with them in a variety of places and at a range of scales. The aims of this unit are to develop an understanding of the tectonic, geomorphological, biological and meteorological processes and features in different environments, and the need for management strategies governed by sustainability and consideration of the direct and indirect effects of human interaction with the Earth and the atmosphere.

The human modules studied (urban issues and challenges, the changing economic world, the challenge of resource management) is concerned with human processes, systems and outcomes and how these change both spatially and temporally. They are studied in a variety of places and at a range of scales and must include places in various states of development, such as higher income countries (HICs), lower income countries (LICs) and newly emerging economies (NEEs). The aims of this unit are to develop an understanding of the factors that produce a diverse variety of human environments; the dynamic nature of these environments that change over time and place; the need for sustainable management; and the areas of current and future challenge and opportunity for these environments.

As stated, the subject of geography is not simply theoretical, however. This is reflected in the third strand of the course and the ‘Geographical Applications’ unit. The modules within this unit (issue evaluation,

fieldwork) are designed to be synoptic—requiring students to draw together knowledge, understanding and skills from the full course of study. It is an opportunity for students to show their breadth of understanding and an evaluative appreciation of the interrelationships between different aspects of geographical study.

Implementation

The following gives a broad overview of how the geography course at GCSE is implemented. For a more comprehensive breakdown of course content and timeframes, please consult the document ‘Detailed curriculum implementation’.

Year	Term		Content
10	Autumn	1	Module 1: UK Physical Landscapes <u>River Landscapes in the UK</u> • The long profile and changing cross profile of a river and its valley • Fluvial processes: erosion, transportation & reasons for deposition • Landforms of erosion: interlocking spurs, waterfalls and gorges • Landforms of both erosion & deposition: meanders and ox-bow lakes • Landforms of deposition: levées, flood plains and estuaries • Human & Physical causes of flooding • The storm hydrograph • Flood management – Hard & soft engineering • An example of a flood management scheme in the UK
		2	<u>Coastal landscapes in the UK</u> • Wave types and characteristics • Coastal Processes: weathering, mass movement, erosion transportation (longshore drift) & deposition – why sediment is deposited in coastal areas • Influence of Geology • Landforms of erosion: headlands and bays, cliffs and wave cut platforms, caves, arches and stacks • Landforms of deposition: beaches, sand dunes, spits and bars • An example of a section of coastline in the UK to identify its major landforms of erosion and deposition. • Coastal Management - Hard & Soft Engineering & management retreat • An example of a coastal management scheme in the UK Links to prior knowledge Coastal systems, including coastal processes and management strategies (Y8). Distinctly marine processes, including erosion, weathering and transportation (longshore drift) (Y8). The water cycle and drainage basin characteristics; flows and stores of water across the landscape (Y9). Module 2: Urban issues and challenges

10	Spring	3	<u>Urban Change (global)</u> - The global pattern of urban change. - Urban trends in different parts of the world including HICs and LICs. - Reasons for urbanisation: migration & natural increase - Megacities A case study of a major city in an LIC or NEE to illustrate: location, importance, growth, social & economic opportunities, and challenges (e.g. shanty towns) - An example of how urban planning is improving the quality of life for the urban poor.
			<u>Urban Change (UK)</u> - Overview of the distribution of population and the major cities in the UK (map) A case study of a major city in the UK to illustrate: location, importance, impact of migration & growth, social, economic & environmental opportunities & challenges An example of an urban regeneration project
10	Spring	4	<u>Urban Sustainability</u> Urban sustainable living, water and energy conservation, waste recycling & creating green space How urban transport strategies are used to reduce traffic congestion
			Links to prior knowledge
			Urban settlements- their composition and character (Y7). The distribution of rural and urban areas within the UK (Y7). Management of urban issues, including traffic and air quality/pollution (Y7) Study of diverse, global areas, including cultural differences and opportunities and challenges posed by these lifestyles (8,9)
			Module 3: Challenge of Natural Hazards
			<u>Introduction to Natural Hazards</u> - Defining & classifying natural hazards - Factors Affecting natural hazards
10	Summer	5	<u>Tectonic Hazards</u> - Theory of plate tectonics - Earthquakes & Volcanic eruptions - Use named examples to show how the effects and responses to a tectonic hazard vary between two areas of contrasting levels of wealth.
			<u>Weather hazards</u> - Global atmospheric circulation - Distribution & causes of tropical storms - Use a named example of a tropical storm to show its effects and responses. - Overview of weather hazards in the UK - An example of a recent extreme weather event in the UK
10	Summer	6	<u>Climate Change</u> - Evidence for climate change from the beginning of the Quaternary period to the present day. - Possible causes of climate change – Natural & Human Managing climate change - mitigation (reducing causes) and adaptation (responding to change)
			Links to prior knowledge

			Introduction to distinctly tectonic hazards, including plate boundaries, structure of the earth and the relationship between plate boundaries and tectonic hazards (Y9). How tectonic hazards can be effectively managed to mitigate loss of life (Y9). The dynamics behind our global weather and climate, including patterns of rainfall, climatic changes (Y7). Long term climatic change across geologic time frames (Y8).
			Module 4: Living World
11	Autumn	1	<u>Introduction to Ecosystems</u> · An example of a small scale UK ecosystem to illustrate the concept of interrelationships within a natural system · The balance between components. The impact on the ecosystem of changing one component. · overview of the distribution and characteristics of large scale natural global ecosystems <u>Tropical Rainforests</u> · Distribution, Physical characteristics - climate, flora & fauna, & people · Biodiversity issues · Rates of deforestation · A case study of a tropical rainforest to illustrate Causes & consequences of deforestation · Sustainable management & ecotourism <u>Cold Environments (polar & Tundra)</u> · Distribution, Physical characteristics - climate, flora & fauna, & people · Biodiversity issues · A case study of a cold environment to illustrate development opportunities (mineral extraction, energy, fishing & tourism) & the challenges of developing cold environments Management of wilderness areas - Development & Conservation Links to prior knowledge Introduction to ecosystems. Components and characteristics of major ecosystems and biomes (Y8). Global distribution of climates and factors explaining their characteristics (Y7). The significance of interdependence and relationship between abiotic and biotic components (Y8). How ecosystems and biomes vary across a geographical area, with a specific focus on African ecosystems (Y8).
11	Autumn	2	Fieldwork · Devising suitable geographical questions- introduction to the enquiry process · Risks associated with physical and human geography · Difference between different data types (primary/secondary, human/physical, qualitative/quantitative) · Methods to measure and record a variety of geographical data · Data presentation techniques – graphical, visual and statistical · Drawing conclusions from field data Making appropriate evaluations of the fieldwork process Module 5: The Changing Economic World

11	Spring	3	<u>Development</u> - Ways of classifying parts of the world according to their level of economic development and quality of life - Development indicators - Demographic Transition Model & links with development - Causes & consequences of uneven development - An overview of the strategies used to reduce the development gap (e.g. Aid & Fairtrade) An example of how the growth of tourism in an LIC or NEE helps to reduce the development gap A case study of one LIC or NEE to illustrate, location, importance, industry, transnational corporations, trade, aid, economic development's impact on the environment and quality of life for the population
			<u>Economic futures in the UK</u> - Employment structure & change – de-industrialisation, development of IT, tertiary sector, research and science and business parks An example of how modern industrial development can be more environmentally sustainable
			Links to prior knowledge:
			Introduction to global population. Trends in global population growth and reasons underpinning these (Y9). Development indicators, and the use of the demographic transition model to illustrate global development and corresponding change to birth rates, death rates and total population (Y9). Distribution of services across urban areas- changes in land use and need for evolving urban provision (Y7)
11	Spring	4	Module 6: Challenge of Resource Management
			<u>Introduction to resources: globally and the UK</u> - Significance and global distribution of food, water and energy - Food resources in the UK - changing demands, food miles, and growth of agribusiness - Water in the UK - shifting demands, managing water quality, water transfer schemes - Energy in the UK - changing energy mix, exploitation of energy resources
			<u>Food</u> - Shifting patterns of supply and demand of food. Reasons for these shifts - Factors influencing food supply - growing food insecurity - Strategies to improve food supply - irrigation, aeroponics, hydroponics, green revolution, appropriate technology - Sustainable food production
			Links to prior knowledge
11	Summer	5	Geographical Applications: Issue Evaluation
			Students will be prepared to sit a pre-release booklet.
			Appropriate revision/recap time (where necessary)
11	Summer	6	Study leave

Implementation: Enrichment

Although course content in lessons is planned with an emphasis on providing enriching experiences, there are alternative means to expand your geographical horizons. To this end, the following resources are beneficial to those considering a GCSE in geography. Should you wish to find out more, please do not hesitate to get in touch with us!

Useful web links:

- https://www.ted.com/talks/al_gore_the_new_urgency_of_climate_change
- <https://www.climateone.org/audio/population-bomb-50-years-later-conversation-paul-ehrlich>
- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/598SVYJ2smP8qJlpH29y7Vj/podcasts> - an enormous range of interesting podcasts on any and everything you might want to know or learn about!

Books:

- Steven Pinker - Enlightenment Now
- Hans Rosling – Factfulness
- Richard Fortey - The Hidden Landscape
- Jared Diamond – Upheaval
- George Monbiot – Feral
- Bill Bryson – A Short History of Nearly Everything
- Tim Marshall – Prisoners of Geography

Documentaries/films

- Typhoon Haiyan – Eye of the Storm: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-BnahLG_DmQ
- Seaspiracy (available on Netflix)
- Climate Change- The Facts: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/m00049b1/climate-change-the-facts>

Impact

Assessment objectives:

In order to gauge the impact of our GCSE geography course, the following assessment objectives (AO's) will be assessed:

- AO1: Demonstrate knowledge of locations, places, processes, environments and different scales (15%).
- AO2: Demonstrate geographical understanding of: concepts and how they are used in relation to places, environments and processes; the interrelationships between places, environments and processes (25%).
- AO3: Apply knowledge and understanding to interpret, analyse and evaluate geographical information and issues to make judgements (35%, including 10% applied to fieldwork context(s)).
- AO4: Select, adapt and use a variety of skills and techniques to investigate questions and issues and communicate findings (25%, including 5% used to respond to fieldwork data and context(s)).

Structure of Assessment:

The GCSE geography course is designed as a two-year linear course—to be assessed upon completion of course content. Students are assessed across three examination papers, after which grades will be awarded. Upon completion of their assessments, students will be awarded a grade from 1-9. To find out

more about necessary requirements within each grade, please consult the document entitled 'GCSE Geography grade descriptors'.

The following table illustrates the content, breakdown and broad expectations of each of the three examinations.

Paper 1: Living with the physical environment – 35% of GCSE	Paper 2: Challenges in the human environment – 35% of GCSE	Paper 3: Geographical applications - 30% of GCSE
What's assessed? • The challenges of natural hazards • The living world • Physical landscapes in the UK • Geographical skills	What's assessed? • Urban issues and challenges • The changing economic world • The challenge of resource management • Geographical skills	What's assessed? • Issue evaluation • Fieldwork • Geographical skills
How it's assessed • Written exam: 1 hour 30 minutes • 88 marks (including 3 marks for SPaG)	How it's assessed • Written exam: 1 hour 30 minutes • 88 marks (including 3 marks for SPaG)	How it's assessed • Written exam: 1 hour 15 minutes • 76 marks (including 6 marks for SPaG) • Pre-release resources booklet made available 12 weeks before Paper 3 exams
Questions • Section A: answer all questions (33 marks) • Section B: answer all questions (25 marks) • Section C: answer any two questions from questions 3,4 and 5 (30 marks) • Question types: multiple choice, short answer, levels of response, extended prose	Questions • Section A: answer all questions (33 marks) • Section B: answer all questions (30 marks) • Section C: answer question 3 and one from questions 4,5 or 6 (25 marks) • Question types: multiple choice, short answer, levels of response, extended prose	Questions • Section A: answer all questions (37 marks) • Section B: answer all questions (39 marks) • Question types: multiple choice, short answer, levels of response, extended prose

Holistic impact

The impact of studying geography at GCSE extends beyond assessments, however. Although exams and qualifications form an important part of your education, they are not the *only* means of assessing the impact of a robust geography education. Within geography we are committed to the premise that, through the study of geography at Ecclesbourne School, students are able to know more, understand more and do more.

Know more

Students should leave, after completing the course, with a much deeper knowledge of locations, places, environments and processes, and of different scales including global; and of social, political and cultural contexts.

Understand more

Students will gain an understanding of the interactions between people and environments, change in places and processes over space and time, and the inter-relationship between geographical phenomena at different scales and in different contexts. They will be able, in short, to 'think like a geographer'.

Do more

Students should be able to develop and extend their competence in a range of skills including those used in fieldwork, in using maps and GIS and in researching secondary evidence, including digital sources.

They will develop their competence in applying sound enquiry and investigative approaches to questions and hypotheses (in other words, they will be able to study like a geographer).

Students will be able to apply geographical knowledge, understanding, skills and approaches appropriately and creatively to real world contexts, including fieldwork, and to contemporary situations and issues; and develop well-evidenced arguments drawing on their geographical knowledge and understanding.

Where can geography take you?

The beauty of geography is its synergy with other subjects. With its ability to straddle both physical and human worlds, there are very few subjects that do not sit well with geography.

Most commonly cited companion, and as stated in [The Uni Guide](#), include: Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, History, English, Business Studies.

That said, the sheer diversity of the subject makes geography an ideal subject to study at GCSE, and beyond. Ultimately, there are few A Levels, degree courses and jobs that a background in geography won't help you with.

For those considering a career in geography, [targetjobs.com](https://www.targetjobs.com) has a list of relevant careers a background in geography can take you. These include: cartographer, environmental manager, land surveyor, town and country planner. For a full list, please follow the targetjobs link, above.