

Geography A Level



COURSE DESCRIPTION

HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

Toby Morris

EXAM BOARD

EDEXCEL

The A Level Geography course will cover both physical and human environments and the complex interaction of processes that shape our world. It will also, importantly, show the applied side of the subject - how human intervention affects the environment and how people adapt and mitigate the effects of processes on their environment. This is complex and dynamic and varies from place to place depending on people's resources, technology and culture. There is plenty of room for discussion and extended research, which will help you become an independent thinker and learner. By the time you get to your exams, you will be able to show your understanding of a range of opinions and be able to illustrate your answers with case studies from local, national and international examples.



You will learn in a wide variety of ways, using maps, GIS skills, data analysis, photos, videos, and podcasts, as well as attending lectures and study days. You will be encouraged to frame your own questions using higher level thinking skills and show your grasp of complex issues through report and essay writing. Fieldwork will be an essential part of your A Level course. You will be offered the chance to go on a residential trip to experience a very different environment to the one where you live.

SKILLS REQUIRED

- Recognise and be able to analyse the complexity of people–environment interactions at all geographical scales, and appreciate how they underpin understanding of some of the key issues facing the world today

Improve your understanding of the ways in which values, attitudes and circumstances have an impact on the relationships between people, place and environment, and

- develop the knowledge and ability to engage, as citizens, with the questions and issues arising ('circumstances' in this case refers to the context of people's lives, and the socio-economic and political milieu in which they find themselves)

PROGRAMME OF STUDY

Paper 1

Tectonic processes and hazards
The water cycle and water insecurity
The carbon cycle and energy security
Glacial landscapes and change

30% of total A Level
(105 marks)

Exam paper
2 hours 15 minutes

Paper 2

Globalisation
Superpowers
Regenerating places
Health, human rights and intervention

30% of total A Level
(105 marks)

Exam paper
2 hours 15 minutes

Paper 3

Synoptic investigation
The synoptic investigation will be based on a geographical issue within a place-based context that links to the three synoptic themes and is rooted in two or more of the compulsory content areas.

20% of total A Level
(70 marks)

Exam paper
2 hours 15 minutes

Paper 4

Coursework
(Independent investigation)
Non-examined
Assessment

20% of total A Level
(70 marks)

- Become confident and competent in selecting, using and evaluating a range of quantitative and qualitative skills and approaches, (including observing, collecting and analysing geo-located data) and applying them as an integral part of your studies
- Understand the fundamental role of fieldwork as a tool to understand and generate new knowledge about the real world, and become skilled at planning, undertaking and evaluating fieldwork in appropriate situations
- Apply geographical knowledge, understanding, skills and approaches in a rigorous way to a range of geographical questions and issues, including those identified in fieldwork, recognising both the contributions and limitations of geography.

EXAMINATION RESULTS

In 2025, students achieved the following results: A*–A 42%; A*–B 74%; A*–C 95%.

ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES

We currently offer a five day residential fieldtrip to the Lake District where students have the chance to learn about glaciated landscapes and urban regeneration.

Local fieldwork trips include water and carbon cycle investigations in Hyde Park and a study of contrasting places where students visit Brick Lane and Dulwich Village.



We also organise trips to Geography-related lectures around London, such as those hosted by the Royal Geographical Society, and encourage students to attend the annual “Going Places With Geography” Higher Education event. There are opportunities for students to attend online conferences in the run up to exams in order to hear advice from current and past examiners.

Our sixth form Geography students are given opportunities to take a leadership role in the school. A level Geography students support younger year groups by mentoring GCSE students and by leading the Eco Action group for KS3 students. Since 2021, selected A level students have participated in the “Green Futures” project run by the Royal Parks. This programme sees Year 12 students lead and mentor Year 9 students in a series of practical conservation projects over the course of a year, whilst earning them an ASDAN (Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network) award in the process.

FUTURE CAREERS

Geography is a broad based subject which provides lots of opportunities for future progression. For example, geography is an obvious choice for careers in sustainability and green issues, urban regeneration, energy supply, retail location, managing the effects of hazards and climate change. For careers in the world of business, an understanding of global economics forms an important part of geography. If you are thinking of a career in law, human rights, international relations or welfare, then geography gives you the opportunity to consider relevant issues such as; How do we measure development? What are the consequences of migration on societies? If you are working towards a future course in medicine or veterinary medicine then geography is a good choice to give your A Level options the breadth that universities seek, as you will gain a clear understanding of how the environment affects health and survival of people, animals and ecosystems as well as enhancing your skills of writing essays and extended reports.

Of course many A Level students do not yet have a clear idea of what kind of career they might want to pursue. If you are in this position, remember that geography as an A level gives you the chance to keep your options open, as it covers both arts and science components. It is quite likely that when you choose geography your classmates will all be doing different combinations of A Level subjects – this adds to the interest when it comes to discussions on issues as everyone will have very different ways of thinking and expressing their opinions.

Geography combines well with a wide range of subjects. It is highly valued by universities as an A Level choice. The Russell Group report published in 2011 names geography as one of the eight facilitating subjects. This is a subject most likely to be required or preferred for entry to degree courses and choosing facilitating subjects will keep more options open to you at university. In 2015 The Guardian identified geography as the 'must-have A Level'.

In the last few years students who have studied Geography have gone on to a variety of destinations such as: Geography, Cambridge; PPE, Oxford; Geography, Bristol; Ecology and Environmental Sciences, Edinburgh; Environmental Sciences, Queen Mary; Geography, Swansea; Geography, UCL; Geography, Leeds; Geography, King's College London; Health and Human Sciences, Durham; History of Art, Leeds; Primary Education, Sheffield Hallam; Geography and International Development, Sussex; Biological Science, Imperial College London; Economics and Finance, De Montford; Environmental Management, Manchester; Geography, Birbeck; International Development, UEA; Development Studies, SOAS; Metropolitan Police CDI Direct Entry Programme; Geography, Manchester; Geology, Bristol.