

Heathcote School and Science College



A Level Geography Transition Guide 2018-2019

Studying geography arms students with a mix of skills employers want to see: Geography students generally do well in terms of their relatively high employment rates. You could attribute this to the fact that the degree helps develop a whole range of employability skills including numeracy, teamwork through regular field trips, analytical skills in the lab and a certain technical savviness through using various specialist computing applications. Also, the subject area in itself cultivates a world view and a certain cultural sensitivity. These all potentially help a geographer to stand out in the labour market.

Nick Keeley, Director of Careers at Newcastle University

Geography is not just a subject but is part of our everyday lives.

It is not only an important and fascinating subject but it also develops a wide range of skills that support other subjects and are valued by employers. These skills include for example: data presentation, data analysis, literacy, numeracy, independence and teamwork (through fieldwork and controlled assessment), problem solving and evaluation.

Geography is highly valued by universities as an A Level choice. The Russell Group report, published in 2015, names Geography as one of the eight facilitating subjects for top performing universities. 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.

Success at A level Geography.

How to be successful at A-level Geography:

Step 1: Organisation of your notes and hand-outs

You will need to buy a sturdy arch lever file and a set of plastic wallets. All the hand outs you receive from both your Geography teachers should be dated and labelled as to which part of the A level they are relevant to. The folders will be inspected on a regular basis.

Step 2: Further reading

It is important that you make additional notes to those made in class by doing further reading using both your set textbook and also additional books from the library. Keep your reading records up to date.

Step 3: Carrying out additional research

It is crucial that you research the topics that you are studying by using the internet. Your Geography teacher will give you some suggested sites to look at and make notes from.

Step 4: Meeting Deadlines

It is essential that you hand homework in on time. Failure to hand homework in on time will result in your Geography teacher contacting home.

Step 5: Attendance

It is essential that you have good attendance to lessons. If you miss any lessons you should make sure that you catch up on any notes that are missed.

How to get the most from Geography lessons.

Geography lessons should be an enjoyable experience and below are a few points which explain how to get the most out of lessons.

Remember: Lessons provide you with a valuable insight into the subject besides just reading the textbook. They can provide new information and help to clarify your understanding.

Preparing for lessons

Know your course: Find out how your lessons relate to the unit you are completing and the course as a whole. Look in your unit handbook, exam board website or wider research for more information or ask your tutor.

Reading before a lesson: Complete any work set by a teacher or find out if there is any recommended reading you can do in preparation. Preparatory reading will make it easier for you to engage with the lesson content. When the lessons are linked in a series, you should also review your notes from the previous lesson.

Taking notes: Make sure your notes are complete but try to avoid taking too many detailed notes or just copying straight from your textbook. A dense transcript will be difficult to work with at a later stage. The following techniques will help you make structured, useful notes.

1. **Using structure in your notes:** Use headings to order information. Highlight examples and illustrations.
2. **Using your own words:** Try putting each point in your own words will help you understand and recall the lesson content.
3. **Using fewer words:** Reduce the number of words you use in taking notes. Detailed notes are of little use in remembering facts and ideas.
 - Use keywords to represent points or ideas briefly.
 - Add brief details of any examples or evidence that support a point.
4. **Using hand-outs:** Teachers use hand-outs to help you follow the lesson and to highlight important information. You can maximise the benefits of hand-outs by adding your own comments.
 - Highlight keywords.
 - Add colour to categorise information.
 - Add notes in the margin.

5. **Organising your notes:** A4 paper stored in a ring binder with dividers is the most practical system for organising notes. You will have two different teachers who teach a different section of the course so it is important to bring the correct notes to each lesson and these will be marked and checked regularly. Begin each lesson with a clear heading, date etc. Number the pages clearly so they can be easily kept in order later on.
6. **Following up lessons:** Don't be afraid to ask your Geography teacher for clarification either in the lesson or afterwards. Review your notes as soon as possible after a lesson. Make the most of your review by:
- highlighting points which seem particularly important or central;
 - adding any details which you can remember from the lesson;
 - adding questions to highlight areas you don't understand or need further information on.

Overcoming problems

Failing concentration: You are much less likely to find your concentration straying when you use an active approach to note taking. Putting points into your own words, using space, colour and image, will make note taking a busy but interesting activity.

Being left behind: You may find that the information is being delivered too fast for you to write down. If points pass you by, then leave a space and compare your notes with another student's. Doing some background reading for the lesson will help you to keep up as the information will not be entirely unfamiliar to you.



A Level Geography

At A Level students will complete areas of study 1 and 2 in year 12 and continue to study areas 3 and 4 in year 13:

1. **Dynamic Landscapes** – This consists of a study of “Tectonic hazards” (topic 1); earthquakes and volcanoes and their secondary hazards such as tsunamis. We will also study either “Glaciated Landscapes and Change”(topic 2A) or “Coastal Landscapes and Change” (topic 2B).
2. **Dynamic Places** – This consists of a compulsory study of “Globalisation”(topic 3); its causes, impacts and the key players involved in the interdependence of places. We will then study either “Regenerating places”(topic 4A) or “Diverse places” (topic 4B).
3. **Physical Systems and Sustainability** – This consists of topic 5 “The Water Cycle and Water Insecurity” and then topic 6 “The Carbon Cycle and Energy Security”.
4. **Human Systems and Geopolitics** – This consists of topic 7 “Superpowers” and then topic 8 “Global Development and Connections” within which there are two optional sections and students must study either “Health, Human Rights and Intervention” (topic 8A) or “Migration, Identity and Sovereignty” (topic 8B)

Fieldwork

There is a requirement for students to complete 4 days fieldwork and this will include 3 days in year 12 whereby we travel to South Devon to explore the themes of coastal processes & management and regeneration in rural areas. Students also undertake 1 day of fieldwork in central London in year 13, collecting data for their independent investigation. This will relate to the themes of globalisation, regeneration or health or human rights and intervention, depending on the student's preference. The approximate cost for this trip will be £200.00, which can be paid in instalments.



How your Geography A Level will be assessed: A Level Geography is assessed with three exams and one piece of coursework, the independent investigation.

Papers 1 and 2 are on both 2 hours and 15 minutes in length and account for 30% of the qualification. These assess knowledge and understanding of all areas of study, paper one for topics 1, 2A or 2B, 5 and 6 and paper two for topics 3, 4A or 4B, 7 and 8 including 8A or B.

Paper 3 is also 2 hours and 15 minutes in length but accounts for 20% of the final qualification and will be a synoptic assessment based on a geographical issue within a place-based context.

The independent investigation will account for 20% of the qualification. Students are required to undertake an independent investigation that involves (but which need not be restricted to) fieldwork. The focus of the investigation must be derived from the specification the student is studying. The guidance for word length is 3000-4000 words. Text in tables does not count in the word guidance.

See sample assessment pages at: www.edexcel.com/alevelgeography16.

Reading List for A Level Geography

Below is a list of resources which would be very helpful to read before and during the course.

General

Mandatory purchase - *Geography for A Level Year 1 and AS – Digby, B*

Edexcel A/AS Level, Book 1 – Pearson

Prisoners of Geography, Tim Marshall

The Geographical Association provides an excellent range of resources on their website: <http://www.geography.org.uk/resources>

The Royal Geographical Society also provides some free resources on a range of current topics: <http://www.rgs.org/HomePage.htm>

National Geographic Magazine is a monthly magazine available on subscription from £19 per year. Hugely interesting, visual and often appropriate to areas of study in the course. Often included free posters and other resources.

<https://www.national-geographic-magazine.co.uk/home?gclid=CNWk1dSKuNQCFcKT7QodMqQPsg&gclsrc=aw.ds>

Geographical Magazine is a monthly journal available on subscription at <http://info.geographical.co.uk/>

Geography Review is also available on subscription at <http://www.hoddereducation.co.uk/Product?Product=9781471857140>

The British Geographer is an excellent website for all aspects of this course <http://thebritishgeographer.weebly.com/>

Dynamic Landscapes

A Level Geography Contemporary Case Studies: Natural Hazards & Disasters: Natural Hazards and Disasters Paperback (2008) by Sue Warn & David Holmes

A Level Geography Contemporary Case Studies: Rivers & Coasts Paperback by Bob Horden (2008)

Top Spec Geography: Tectonic Hazards (2012) by Cameron Dunn and Martin Degg

Access to Geography: Hazards Paperback by Malcolm Skinner (2003)

Edexcel AS/A-level Geography Student Guide 1: Tectonic Processes and Hazards; Glaciated Landscapes and Change; Coastal Landscapes and Change (Student Guides) by Cameron Dunn (2016) (*not available until 28 Oct 2016*)

<http://www.acegeography.com/plate-tectonics.html>

<https://www.usgs.gov/>

<http://www.bgs.ac.uk/>

Dynamic Places

Contemporary Case Studies: Cities and Urbanisation by Kim Adams & Sue Warn (2008)

AS/A2 Geography Contemporary Case Studies: Rural Development and the Countryside—by D Knifton & Sue Warn (2010)

Discovering Cities range (various cities) Series Editors Peter S. Fox & Christopher M. Law (2001-2006) see GA website for more details.

Top Spec Geography: Changing Places by Emma Rawlings Smith, Simon Oakes & Alastair Owens (2016)

Where will success take me?

Anywhere on Earth!

If you specialise in Geography at higher education (or use your Geography A Level as a stepping stone to study Geology at university) you could find yourself doing things like charting oil wells or exploring rock formations throughout the world. And because Geography is about the interaction between people and our planet, this fascinating subject is valid for a number of different career paths, like advertising, environmental management, law or social services.

Geographers make the best employees because of their range of skills and knowledge about such a wide range of topics.

Wishing you the best of luck in what is hopefully the first step of many in discovering a world of Geography.