



Newent
Community School
and Sixth Form Centre

Bridging the GCSE to A Level Geography Gap



This pack contains information about A Level Geography and a programme of activities and resources to prepare you to start an A Level in Geography in September. It is aimed to be used after you complete your GCSEs, during the remainder of the summer term and the summer holidays.

Course Structure & Content

We follow the AQA specification (7037). There are 8 lessons per fortnight. Below is a summary of what you will study:

Physical Geography (Paper 1)
Water & Carbon Cycles
Coastal Systems & Landscapes
Hazards
Geographical Skills

Human Geography (Paper 2)
Global Systems & Global Governance
Changing Places
Population & the Environment
Geographical Skills

Independent Investigation (NEA)

You will complete an Independent Investigation (NEA) worth 20%, including fieldwork across at least four days, which may include a residential trip.

Your investigation will be based on a question you design, linked to any part of the specification.

Assessment

Physical Geography written exam (2 hours 30 mins) – 40%

Human Geography written exam (2 hours 30 mins) – 40%

Independent Investigation (NEA) – 20%

Entry Qualifications

Learners who are beginning the course are likely to have followed a Key Stage 4 programme of study. The specification builds on, but does not depend on, the knowledge, understanding and skills specified for GCSE Geography. This qualification provides the ideal foundation for learners to progress to Higher Education for study in Geography or a number of other subjects due to the skills gained.

Career Prospects

Everything and anything! Employers like the flexibility and adaptability that Geographers bring. Equipped with ICT, decision making, and critical thinking skills, as well as being able to take an objective view on contemporary issues in the rapidly changing world in which we live. There are a variety of free online resources available that we would recommend having a look at on both the Future Learn website www.futurelearn.com/subjects/nature-and-environment-courses and Gresham website www.gresham.ac.uk/schools/geography. The Geography resources have a particular focus on environmental challenges, climate change & water. These are really useful for doing some deeper reading, getting a head start on your subject along with exploring university/career pathways and identifying how your subjects relate to everyday life and society. Make sure that you look at and update your Unifrog account too. They also provide a great way to discover potential EPQ topics if you are looking to include this course in your study programme.

<https://www.rgs.org/iamageographer/>

<https://www.rgs.org/schools/teaching-resources/going-places-with-geography-video/>

Differences between GCSE and A Level

You'll find yourself in smaller classes at A-level meaning your contribution to group activities and discussions is far more valued. Therefore, preparation for classes will be key, revising notes from the previous class to refresh your mind and without being prompted to do so. At GCSE level, work is highly structured with specific requirements for homework whereas at A-Level there is a great expectation for taking the initiative in going beyond the set reading – you need to understand as well as learn the content. Prepping for these classes is one worthwhile way to use those new free periods which you'll have. Because you'll be studying fewer subjects, you need to be fully engaged with each of them. If you don't engage with the subject, then it's much more difficult to do the extra reading or work you need to get a good grade. This is why it's so important to choose A-Levels you'll enjoy and find interesting.

Assignments will generally have higher word counts, too. Exam questions will require more detail as the marks total will be higher. Don't worry, you will grow accustomed to this. To really succeed, you'll have to sharpen your ability to form well-structured arguments by drawing on further examples to support your case, meaning extra reading will also be required of you outside of class.

Organise yourself: As an A Level student, you'll be expected to take responsibility for your education. That means turning up to lessons on time – prepared, with the right equipment, and any homework due. Don't be the student who always forgets about the essay deadline until five minutes before the lesson. But, with several subjects all making demands of you, you'll need some help. Use a homework diary or notebook to jot down important dates, and double check you've got the right books for your classes in the morning. Invest in stationery: buy a large pack of cheap biros, lots of lined paper, and a different coloured folder for each subject to help you file your notes. It's also worth taking advantage of your free periods to knuckle down and get on with your work. You'll feel much better taking the evenings off after working hard all day.

There will be more of an onus on you to manage your own workload and proactively seek out advice from your tutor/teacher when you need it. As the classes are smaller, this means that you develop a stronger relationship with them too as they have more time to get to know you and examine your individual progress.

You're also probably starting to take on further responsibilities beyond your studies and it's your job to balance these responsibilities with your studies. Perhaps that includes a part-time job – so you can begin to build a CV – driving lessons, hobbies and clubs – which might contribute towards your personal statement – as well as spending time with your friends.

There are three key parts to Sixth Form success:

1. **reactive** study (work set in class),
2. **homework** (work set by your teachers)
3. **proactive** study (work you set yourself).

Recent national educational research has demonstrated that the very top achieving Sixth Form students are completing, on average, around 15 hours of work outside of lessons every single week by the time they are in Year 13. Such high levels of intrinsic motivation and self-discipline as this are not only crucial to achieve top grades, but also in the future to excel at undergraduate study and in the workplace.

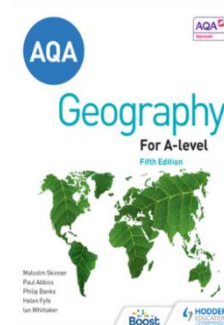
With this increased level of independence, it can be really tempting to spend all the free time you have socialising in the common room. However, if you get into the habit of using your time effectively, and organise yourself so you know when you have deadlines and when you're going to do your work, then A-levels will seem much easier and less of a jump than expected. Particularly during the pressure points when you have coursework or exams, being organised and motivated from the start will ensure that you're really prepared, and not too stressed.

At any point during A-levels, if you're finding it hard, or are struggling with the workload, then it's always worth seeking advice and support. Your form tutor, subject teachers, and MrMcCarthy head of sixth form are a good place to start and the earlier you talk to someone about any difficulties that you're having, the sooner they can be resolved.

Resources

We use the AQA A Level Geography (fifth edition) textbook published by Hodder Education; Skinner, Abbiss, Banks, Fyfe and Whittaker.

ISBN: 9781398312548
Published: 2021



You may wish to consider buying your own personal copy.

You will be given access to the online version of the book through the **Boost** website but if you want to have a look before then, please contact your Geography teacher.

There are also some 'Topic Master' books from Hodder Education on some of the topics in the A Level course so have a look at their publications too.

How can I develop as a Geographer before September?

There is a great list of podcasts and books to read here: [Wider Geography Summer Challenge - Internet Geography](#)

Here are some other links to journals and magazines, websites, podcasts, documentaries, articles, books and even films which provide a great way of staying inspired and engaged with Geography.

Journals and magazines

- Geography Review – which you have free access to with the website used for the online textbook.
- *Geography* - is the Geographical Association's international journal for lecturers, teachers and students in post-16 geography.

Websites

You need to be aware of current global events that are related to the units you will be studying; so watch/read the news each week. You can use Google Alerts or frequently check news websites.

- www.bbc.co.uk an excellent source of up to date articles - explore the headings such as Science, UK, WORLD
- www.theguardian.com/uk Again many useful articles and logically ordered. It is free to access and covers environmental and development issues more comprehensively than other media outlets – keep an eye on the Environment, Science, Society, Global Development Stories.
- www.telegraph.co.uk
- <https://theconversation.com/uk> - Up to date articles from academics and specialists in the field written in a way that is accessible to all, summarising the key points in a short but insightful articles.
- www.nationalgeographic.com
- www.geographyalltheway.com
- <https://www.geography.org.uk/teaching-resources/secondary-and-post-16-resources>
- www.gatm.org.uk

Podcasts

If you really want to start thinking like an A-level Geographer, there are some excellent subject specific podcasts out there, hosted by academics and experts in their field. You can find some by googling: "Ask the Geographer" by the Royal Geographical Society, "BBC Costing the Earth" and "Geography Ninja". Pick an area that interests you or if you would like some extra focus the main themes you will be studying at A-level.

<https://eternalexploration.wordpress.com/2016/01/04/top-10-podcasts-for-geography-students> - this has a number of different links to geography podcasts, specifically targeted to Geography students. We definitely recommend the TED talks, again just search for a particular topic of interest to you.

Geographical Documentaries

There are some great geographical documentaries which will help develop your general geographical knowledge and understanding and help you see what an amazing world we live in. Found on iPlayer, ITVhub or Geoflix among others.

- David Attenborough Box Sets
- Simon Reeve around the World
- Joanna Lumley's Hidden Caribbean: Havana to Haiti
- Race across the World
- Andrew Marr's Megacities
- Dispatches programmes on Ch4
- Earth from Space – episode 4 The Changing Planet

Useful articles to start you off:

Coasts

<http://www.rgs.org/schools/resources-for-schools/coasts>

Water and carbon cycles

<https://www.rgs.org/schools/teaching-resources/water-and-carbon-cycles/> scroll down to find it.

Hazards

https://www.thegeographeronline.net/uploads/2/6/6/2/26629356/gf731_what_makes_people_vulnerable_to_natural_hazards.pdf

<https://www.thegeographeronline.net/uploads/2/6/6/2/26629356/hazard-hotspots.pdf>

<https://www.geolsoc.org.uk/Plate-Tectonics>

Global governance

<http://www.rgs.org/schools/resources-for-schools/global-systems-and-global-governance>

Globalisation and migration

<https://landau-forte.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/9/2015/07/GeoFile-Globalisation.pdf>

Disease

Tracking the Coronavirus Pandemic: <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/> and

<https://ourworldindata.org/> and <https://www.who.int/> Look at the WHO website for other diseases: location, epidemiology, impacts, responses, strategies for eradication etc.

Changing Places

<https://pmt.physicsandmathstutor.com/download/Geography/A-level/Notes/OCR/Changing-Spaces-Making-Places/Set-A/Notes%20on%20Changing%20Places,%20Making%20Places%20-%20OCR%20Geography%20A-level.pdf>

Films and books

There are many relevant films and books – a small selection:

Films - An Inconvenient Truth, The Impossible

Books (a small selection of fiction and non-fiction):

- Sebastian Junger (2006) The Perfect Storm
- Al Gore (2006) An Inconvenient Truth
- Jonathan Watts (2010) When a billion Chinese jump
- Nicholas Crane (2007) Great British Journeys
- Jan Zalasiewicz (2010) The Planet in a Pebble

Also see the Geographical Association's (GA) reading list: -

<http://www.geography.org.uk/resources/studentinformation> / - (Scroll down to 'Reading list for post-16 students').

Preparing for Sixth Form

Section A: Study Skills

Understanding a topic

If the key to success at A-Level is understanding a topic, how do students acquire this understanding? Understanding comes from reading about a subject, knowing the facts in depth and being aware of and considering the views and ideas of a range of other people. It comes from thinking deeply about a topic rather than covering it a superficial sense.

Reading around a topic

We often ask students to 'read around the subject', but what does this actually mean? Use the resources section to help you over the summer months. Get a feeling for each topic that you are going to study.

Making notes effectively

We tell students to read and make notes on a topic, again what does this mean? And what is expected as an end result? Making notes is all about extracting key points from a text. This takes a great deal of skill and must, therefore, be practised. Note-taking is NOT about copying the words somebody else has written on to a page you are writing. Note-taking is about reducing the material, so it can be understood and recalled more easily. Some students find it very difficult to reduce material to a series of key points e.g. bullet points. Bullet points are more easily recalled than entire paragraphs.

Creating bullet points is an intellectual skill as the KEY POINT has to be identified, which is not always very easy. If the key point cannot be identified then it is unlikely the paragraph will be recalled, as it has not been clearly understood.

Here is a Youtube link to how to make notes using the Cornell method:

[Cornell Notes Method of Taking Notes - YouTube](#)

Now find a short video/read an article and practise this method.

Summary:

Big picture: establish what the whole source of writing is about (so look at the title and the first paragraph). This helps your understanding.	Key points: scan the headings and sub-headings before you read in detail. This helps identify what might be important as key points to go in the left hand-side of your Cornell notes.	Be creative: use diagrams and underlining, <u>colours</u> , arrows and links Be individual: do what works for you Be selective: avoid copying out chunks of writing.	Skill: making selective notes isn't easy: you need to keep doing it until you get better. It will be hard at first and you will be tempted to simply copy out chunks, as you normally do: that isn't helpful at all! Get out of that habit!
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Section B: A-Level Transition Projects

Aim: The aim of the tasks detailed below are to help you develop some of the skills and knowledge you need to succeed in Geography at A-Level.

1. Unsurprisingly there is a lot of over-lap between topics studied in GCSE and A-level Geography. You absolutely must have a firm understanding of these topics at GCSE to enable you to grasp them at A-level. To do this you should use your revision mindmats, flash cards etc that fall into the categories studied at A Level eg coasts and tectonics. Most of you have already done this during lockdown.

2. Start reading through the A Level textbook – contact us if you would like a temporary username and password. Get a feel for the topics – check which ones that you will be studying (shown at the front of this booklet) – it is not the whole book!

3. Buy yourself a notebook/scrapbook and have a look at the resources that we have listed. Choose a selection of different podcasts, articles etc and then either print it off or just write a summary of what you have found according to your interests:

- What are the key things that the article is telling you about?
- Can you summarise it into 10 main points? Practise your Cornell notes.
- What part of Geography does this link to?
- Are there any keywords that you need to look into more or you feel would be useful for your studies?

Bring this to your first lesson in September.

4. As part of your A Level, you have to complete a piece of coursework either on the coast or an urban study. There is a good piece about fieldwork on the Royal Geographical Society:

<https://www.rgs.org/schools/resources-for-schools/coasts-fieldwork-techniques>

The Field-Studies Council are generously streaming lessons on fieldwork investigations and techniques. This will be incredibly useful to

a) Recap what you did during GCSE

b) Look forward to A-level and think about what your personal coursework project could investigate. Research 'physical geography fieldwork' or 'human geography fieldwork'.

5. Complete **3** of the tasks below and **bring this to your first lesson in September.**

Read one of the geofile articles from the human topics resources list eg global governance, migration, changing places. Complete all the focus questions and tasks at the end. Highlight any words that you don't understand and try to start to make yourself a glossary.	Create a personal geography map of your own area – include photographs, personal reflections and places of importance.	Watch one documentary on climate change. Create 20 questions that people could answer if they were to watch the documentary (specific focus - water and carbon cycles).
Produce a case study on any disease of your choice. What are the causes, spread, location, mitigation strategies, vaccines?	How does the geological structure of the coast influence the development of coastal landscapes?	Research and create case studies on: • one volcanic eruption • one earthquake • one tsunami. Include what caused these hazards, and the social and economic impacts of them. Find an up to date world map showing hazards that have occurred. Describe this map and give any reasons. that you can for the pattern of hazards.