Geography

Entry Requirements

Six GCSEs at Grade 4 or above including at least Grade 4 for English Language and Maths and Grade 5 in Geography.

Introduction and Structure

Your A-level geography course will cover both the 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 i.e. 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. It combines well with both the arts and sciences subjects and is highly regarded by universities due to the variety of skills needed to progress and develop in the subject, including investigative, cartographic, graphical, ICT and statistical.

There are a number of things you can do to prepare for A-level geography:

1. General reading around / watching videos / listening to podcasts etc. to develop your geographical knowledge and understanding
2. Explore the topics and their foundations which will be studied in the A-level course.

To be a great geographer you need to develop the ability to think synoptically, being able to see the greater overview and how everything begins to link together. Geography is not just about studying people and landscapes; it is also the relationships that exist between people and their environment.

GCSE covered a lot of the foundations of the underpinning concepts: physical processes and how they have shaped the landscape and the key human processes that shape our society. GCSE provided a breadth of study, whereas A-level will now enable you to gain greater depth by exploring topics in greater detail but also encouraging you to see and explore the links between topics.

The best geographers at A-level keep reading the news and generally seek to improve their geographical understanding by engaging with geographical discussions regarding key issues.

This guide has been designed for you to dip in and out, from looking at general geographical issues and developing your ability to think like a geographer, through to starting to explore some of the topics covered in Year 12 and Year 13 so you can do some valuable background reading.

Please be aware that if you are eligible for a post 16 bursary then costs for approved relevant books, field work etc may be covered depending on family circumstances – please ask in the sixth form office for further details.

Developing as a Geographer

Please see below for websites, books, podcasts, documentaries and even films which provide a great way of staying inspired and engaging with geography.

Online news websites

The Conversation
We highly recommend you use this. You will find it is really useful to support many of your A-levels. It provides up-to-date articles from academics and specialists in the field written in a way that is accessible to all, summarising key points in short but insightful articles.

BBC News
An excellent source of up-to-date articles – explore the key headings such as Science, as well as the UK, the World and other stories.

The Guardian
Again many useful articles and logically ordered. Keep an eye on the Environment, Science, Society and Global Development stories in particular.

Podcasts

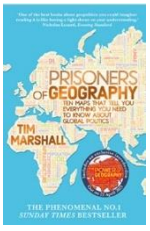
Now is the time to broaden your geographical understanding. Stick your headphones on and listen to some of the following:

BBC Radio 4: *Costing the Earth*
There are some great podcasts here to pick from on a wide variety of geographical issues including: climate change; carbon; urban greening; deforestation; alternative power; plastics

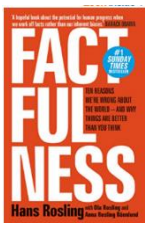
Royal Geographical Society: *Ask the Geographer podcasts*
A fantastic set of podcasts to keep A-level studies up-to-date with the latest geographical research. Pick out some that interest you and give them a go.

Books

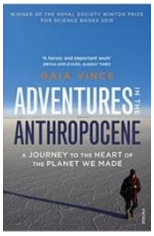
Remember you can make use of your local library's digital library service for books – you don't have to access hard copies.



Prisoners of Geography (Marshall, Tim)
An insightful book which helps understand how physical geography impacts on political reality and really helps to understand how decisions of world leaders have been shaped by geography – a great introduction to geopolitics.



Factfulness (Rosling, Hans)
Ten reasons we're wrong about the world – and why things are better than you think. This is a must-read book from a geography perspective – it takes a more realistic view of the world, presenting issues in fact-based context. It is a rational look at actually how far the world has measurably improved and what's left to be done.



Adventures in the Anthropocene (Vince, Gaia)
This looks at the effects that humans are having on the surface and structure of the planet with a balanced view on recognising threats and dangers whilst also look for practical answers and solutions.

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.

The following are available on iPlayer/BritBox:

David Attenborough

Amazing boxsets exploring our amazing world

Simon Reeve

The Americas

Around the World

Mediterranean

The following are available on Channel 4 On Demand

Dispatches

When the Immigrants Leave

Unreported World

China's Lonely Hearts

The World's Dirtiest River

Forest of Fear

Hurricane Hell

The World's Dirtiest Air

Geographical Films

Some are available online free – others may be available on providers such as Amazon Prime, Netflix etc.

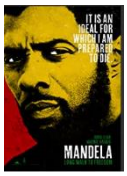
Touching the Void (15)
Great for visualising glacial landscapes. A powerful true story docudrama (strong language in parts).

Before the Flood (PG)
National Geographic. Presented by Leonardo DiCaprio, exploring climate change and looking at what needs to be done today to prevent catastrophic disruption of life on our planet.

The Impossible (12)
Movie based on real life events of the 2004 Boxing Day tsunami which killed 200,000 people

Slumdog Millionaire (15)
Based on life in the slums of Mumbai

Our Planet
Netflix series. Explores how climate change impacts all living creatures



Mandela: Long Walk to Freedom (12)
An epic which celebrates the journey of Nelson Mandela from childhood in a rural village through to his election as President of South Africa. This explores what happened in South Africa with regards to apartheid and Black opposition through the eyes of Nelson Mandela

Hotel Rwanda (12)
The true story of hotel manager who houses and protects Tutsi refugees. This is a hard-hitting film based on the Rwandan conflict of the 1990s.

The Last King of Scotland (15)
Another hard-hitting story, based on struggles faced by Uganda under the dictatorship of Idi Amin.

Into the Wild (15)
Based on the story of a university graduate who gives up all of his material possessions and journeys alone into the Alaskan wilderness.

Preparing for A-Level Geography

At Taverham High we follow the AQA A-level. There are six examined units and one non-examined assessment (NEA) i.e. an independent geographical investigation.

Component 1 – Physical Geography

The study of core geographical concepts along with contrasting themes of contemporary or environmental impact, management and sustainability of the physical environment. You must study Section A and then select one of the options from Section B and Section C.

Component 2 – Human Geography

The study of current issues and human interaction with their environments. It links contemporary issues and environmental impacts, management and sustainability. You must study Section A and Section B and choose 1 from Section C.

	Section A	**Section B**	**Section C**
Physical	Water and carbon cycles	Hot desert systems and landscapes ***or*** Coastal systems and landscapes ***or*** Glacial systems and landscapes	Hazards ***or*** Ecosystems under stress
Human	Global systems and global governance	Changing places	Contemporary urban environments ***or*** Population and the environment ***or*** Resource security

Component 3 - Geography Fieldwork Investigation

You complete an individual investigation which must include data collected in the field. The individual investigation must be based on a question or issue defined and developed by yourself, relating to any part of the specification content.

Assessment

Component 1 – Physical Geography
Written exam: 2 hours 30 minutes
120 marks
40% of A-level
Questions:

- Section A: answer all questions (36 marks)
- Section B: answer either question 2 or question 3 or question 4 (36 marks)
- Section C: answer either question 5 or question 6 (48 marks)
- Question types: multiple-choice, short answer, levels of response and extended prose

Component 2 – Human Geography
Written exam: 2 hours 30 minutes
120 marks
40% of A-level
Questions:

- Section A: answer all questions (36 marks)
- Section B: answer all questions (36 marks)
- Section C: answer either question 3 or question 4 or question 5 (48 marks)
- Question types: multiple-choice, short answer, levels of response, extended prose

Component 3 – Geography Fieldwork Investigation
3,000 – 4,000 words
60 marks
20% of A-level
Marked by teachers
Moderated by AQA

Careers

Geography is a broad based subject which combines a variety of skills from the analytical and observational, working as part of a group presenting information, and you will have a better understanding of world interactions as a whole, from local through to international. Careers achieved with geography range from green and urban Issues to law and human rights (how do we measure development? what are the consequences of migration on societies?) and medicine (how does the environment affect the health and survival of people?). Most careers are open to you as the skills developed within the subject are very transferable and respected by employers.

Preparation for September

Keep a scrapbook of articles relating to geographical topics covered during the course (and others you think are relevant and interesting to geography). Please bring with you to your first class in September.

- use a variety of sources – internet, broadsheet, red-top papers, TV news reports, magazines such as National Geographic and Geographical, but also New Scientist, the Economist, New Internationalist.
- highlight key terms
- summarise the article into two or three sentences
- what geographical questions can be asked about the article/image – What? Where? When? Why? Whom?

We have put the following together for you for you to start doing some reading round the topics we will be covering across the two years. For each topic we have given a brief overview and then some starting points, with examples of reading and video links for you to follow up.

In the September of Year 12 we start with Water and Carbon Cycles and Contemporary Urban Environments.

If you have any questions whilst exploring the following please do not hesitate to contact us.

Component 1: Physical Geography

We cover the following three topics:

Topic 1: water and carbon cycles

Water and carbon are fundamental to supporting life on earth and are hence regarded as 'earth's life support systems. Water and carbon are cycled in both open and closed systems between the land, oceans and the atmosphere. The processes in the water and carbon cycles are inter-related. Human activity is increasingly threatening and altering water and carbon cycles for example through deforestation, ocean acidification, desertification etc. It is important that we look at global and national solutions to protect these.

Reading

Royal Geographical Society	*Water and Carbon Cycling* This is an excellent starting point / content overview for the water and carbon work that we will be looking at
Khan Academy	*Introduction to the Carbon Cycle* Learn how carbon moves through Earth's ecosystems
Khan Academy	*Introduction to the Water Cycle* Learn how water moves through Earth's ecosystems

Topic 2: hot desert systems and landscapes

In this optional unit you will explore dryland environments which occur at all latitudes and are characterised by limited soil moisture caused by low precipitation and high evaporation. The focus is mainly on hot deserts and their margins, where the operation of characteristic Aeolian and episodic fluvial processes with their distinctive landscape outcomes are readily observable.

Reading

Arup	*Cities Alive: rethinking cities in arid environments* Ideas about how populations are and are needing to deal with populations in arid environments with some good information about the management of certain arid areas

Topic 3: hazards

In this optional unit you will focus on the lithosphere and the atmosphere which intermittently but regularly present natural hazards to human populations, often in dramatic and sometimes catastrophic fashion.

Reading

The Guardian	*Are hurricanes getting stronger – and is climate breakdown to blame?* Scientific research surrounding hurricanes and climate change
The Geological Society	*Plate Tectonics* This will be a good step up from your GCSE work to A-level and is definitely worth reading / working through
USGS	*Natural Hazards* Some excellent reading here in bitesize chunks – well worth exploring

Component 2: Human Geography

We cover the following topics for Component 2.

Topic 1: Changing Places

This unit explores the relationships and connections between people, the economy and society and their contributing to place making (i.e. creating places). The unit explores the meanings and representations attached to places and how place making takes place at a variety of scales. It explores places from a local to global level.

Reading

PMT Education	*Changing Places: detailed notes* A good starting point

Topic 2: global systems and global governance

In this section you will focus on globalisation – the economic, political and social changes associated with technological and other driving forces which have been a key feature of global economy and society in recent decades. Increased interdependence and transformed relationships between peoples, states and environments have prompted more or less successful attempts at a global level to manage and govern some aspects of human affairs.

Global Systems

Reading

Tutor2U	*Introduction to migration*
EconomicsOnLine	*Introduction to globalisation*

Video

YouTube	*Globalization – Rise of Networks* A series of short films documenting the fast-changing landscape at the intersection of globalisation and the ongoing expansion of information networks
TopDocumentaryFilms	*The Cost of a Coke* Looking at Coca-Cola as a TNC
Channel 4: Jon Snow Explains	*Immigration: Is Britain Getting Full?*
YouTube: New York Times	*Between Borders: America's Migrant Crisis*
YouTube: DW documentary	*Fleeing Climate Change* The real environmental disaster of forced migration due to climate change

Global Governance

Reading

PMT Education	*Human Rights*

Video

BBC iPlayer: Stacey Dooley Investigates	*World's Worst Place to be a Woman?*
TED Talk: Mary Robinson	*Why climate change is a threat to human rights*
TED Talk: Kristen Wenz	*What if a single human right could change the world?*

Antarctica

Live Science: Nola Taylor Redd	*Antarctica: the southernmost continent*
British Antarctic Survey	*BAS ongoing research*

Climate Change

"Climate Change is considered by many to be the planet's greatest threat"

Video

BBC iPlayer David Attenborough	*Climate Change – The Facts*
BBC One Panorama	Climate Change: what can we do?
TED Talk: Greta Thunberg	*The disarming case to act right now on climate change*

Reading

The Guardian	*Climate Change* An excellent section on Climate Change which is frequently updated with articles and is well worth dipping into
The Conversation	Articles on climate change A wealth of frequently updated articles –highly recommended