

Preparing for A Level Geography

Welcome to A Level geography at Maiden Erlegh School!

In preparation for September, there are number of things you can do:

1. **Developing as a geographer** – through general reading around / watching videos / listening to podcasts etc. to develop your geographical knowledge and understanding
2. **Preparing for the A Level Course** Starting to 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.

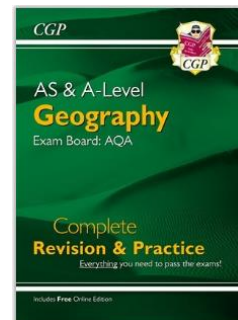
At GCSE you have covered a lot of the foundations of the underpinning concepts; physical processes and how they have shaped the landscape and the key human processes that shape our society. GCSE has provided a breadth of study, whereas A Level will now enable you to gain greater depth by exploring topics 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 be able to dip in and out of, from looking at general geographical issues and developing your ability to think like a geographer, through to starting to explore some of the topics we will be looking at in Year 12 and 13 so you can do some valuable background reading.

Our recommended text for this course is the following revision guide:

<https://www.cgpbooks.co.uk/secondary-books/as-and-a-level/geography>



DEVELOPING AS A GEOGRAPHER

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

i. ONLINE NEWS ARTICLES

THE CONVERSATION.COM <http://theconversation.com/uk> *We can highly recommend you use this!* This you will find 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 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news> - an excellent source of up to date articles – explore the key headings such as Science, as well as the UK, World and other stories.

THE GUARDIAN <https://www.theguardian.com/uk> - again many useful articles and logically ordered – keep an eye on the Environment, Science, Society, Global Development stories in particular!

ii. PODCASTS

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

Costing the Earth – There are some great podcasts here to pick from on a wide variety of geographical issues <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006r4wn/episodes/player> (many topics, including amongst others.. climate change, carbon, urban greening, deforestation, alternative power, plastics etc.)

Royal Geographical Society – “Ask the Geographer” podcasts - <https://www.rgs.org/schools/teaching-resources/ask-the-expert-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!

iii. BOOKS

Remember you can make use of the local libraries digital library service for books – you don't have to access hard copies, although most can be bought fairly cheaply on Amazon.

[Prisoners of Geography](#) (Marshall, T) – 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: Ten reasons we're wrong about the world – and why things are better than you think](#) (Rosling, H 2019) – this is a must-read book from a geography perspective – this 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, G) (2016) – 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.

iv. 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 all available on **iPlayer**.*

- **David Attenborough Box Sets** – there are 9 amazing boxsets available on iPlayer from David Attenborough exploring our amazing world <https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/group/p06m42d9>
- **The Americas with Simon Reeve** <https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episodes/m00095p0/the-americas-with-simon-reeve>
- **Simon Reeve around the World** <https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/group/p06rrnkm>
- **Mediterranean with Simon Reeve** <https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episodes/b0bnb6tt/mediterranean-with-simon-reeve>
- **Race Across the World** <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m0002tvs>

The following are all available on **ITV Hub**

- **Britain Underwater: Fighting the Floods** <https://www.itv.com/hub/britain-underwater-fighting-the-floods/7a0157>
- **Joanna Lumley's Hidden Caribbean: Havana to Haiti** <https://www.itv.com/hub/joanna-lumleys-hidden-caribbean-havana-to-haiti/2a7578>

The following are all available on **Channel 4 – On Demand**

- **When the Immigrants Leave** (Dispatches) <https://www.channel4.com/programmes/dispatches/on-demand/69555-001>
- **China's Lonely Hearts** (Unreported World) <https://www.channel4.com/programmes/unreported-world/on-demand/56011-011>
- **The World's Dirtiest River** (Unreported world) <https://www.channel4.com/programmes/unreported-world/on-demand/58399-001>
- **Forests of Fear** (Unreported World) - <https://www.channel4.com/programmes/unreported-world/on-demand/69224-006>
- **Hurricane Hell (Unreported World)** <https://www.channel4.com/programmes/unreported-world/on-demand/69224-007>
- **The World's Dirtiest Air (Unreported World)** <https://www.channel4.com/programmes/unreported-world/on-demand/67193-002>
- **The Week Britain Froze (Dispatches)** <https://www.channel4.com/programmes/dispatches/on-demand/66548-007>

v. GEOGRAPHICAL FILMS

(some are available online free – others may be available on providers such as Amazon Prime / Netflix etc.)

- **Before the Flood (2016) (PG)** – National Geographic <https://www.filmsforaction.org/watch/before-the-flood-2016/> (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 (2012) (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.

PREPARING FOR A LEVEL GEOGRAPHY

We follow the AQA A Level. You will have two examined units and one NEA (Non-Examined Assessment) i.e. an independent geographical investigation.

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.

If you want to know where to start, in the September of Year 12 we start with Coastal Landscapes and Contemporary Urban Environments.

PAPER 1 - PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY

Coastal Systems and Landscapes (Year 12)

Coastal Systems and Landscapes focuses on coastal zones, which are dynamic environments in which landscapes develop by the interaction of winds, waves, currents and terrestrial and marine sediments. The operation and outcomes of fundamental geomorphological processes and their association with distinctive landscapes are readily observable. This topic explores the relationship between coastal processes and the impacts that this can have upon human activity. It also offers lots of opportunities to develop fieldwork skills; many students go on to base their NEA on a coastal environment.

Video: Power of the Planet (Oceans) <https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x5amshu>

Reading: Landscape Systems (Royal Geographical Society) – this is an excellent starting point / content overview for the ‘systems approach’ work that we will be looking at <https://www.rgs.org/schools/teaching-resources/landscape-systems/>

The Water and Carbon Cycle (Year 12)

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.

Video: The Disarming case to act right now climate change – Greta Thunberg (TED TALK) https://www.ted.com/talks/greta_thunberg_the_disarming_case_to_act_right_now_on_climate_change

Reading: Water and Carbon Cycling (Royal Geographical Society) – this is an excellent starting point / content overview for the water and carbon work that we will be looking at <https://www.rgs.org/CMSPages/GetFile.aspx?nodeguid=6dc9f1c1-f92d-4c04-9f85-9985844a6a79&lang=en-GB>

Reading: Introduction to the Carbon Cycle <https://www.khanacademy.org/science/biology/ecology/biogeochemical-cycles/a/the-carbon-cycle>

Reading: Introduction to the Water Cycle <https://www.khanacademy.org/science/biology/ecology/biogeochemical-cycles/a/the-water-cycle>

Hazards (Year 13)

In this unit you will explore how earth's surface and internal processes can create hazards including earthquakes, volcanoes, tropical storms and wildfires. This topic explores how our understanding has evolved with regards to the seismic and volcanic activity that we experience through the movement of the earth's tectonic plates. We look at how these tectonic processes have shaped our world and created new landforms, helping to support life on earth. We also explore the potential impact of the hazards associated with earthquakes and volcanoes and how as technology has developed we have improved our ability to predict and mitigate, whilst considering reasons for the variation in risks associated with hazards both spatially and over time. We will be looking at the concepts of risk and resilience and how these can be managed at various levels and to various degrees of success.

Starting points...

Video: Power of the Planet (Volcano) <https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x5af4kg> - a GREAT introduction to the work we will be doing on plate tectonics at the start of Year 12

Reading: Plate Tectonics (The Geological Society) – this will be a good step up from your GCSE work to A Level and is definitely worth reading / working through <https://www.geolsoc.org.uk/Plate-Tectonics>

Reading: USGS Natural Hazards – FAQ <https://www.usgs.gov/faq/natural-hazards> – some excellent reading here in bitesize chunks – well worth exploring

Paper 2 – Human geography

Changing Places (Year 12)

This section of our specification focuses on people's engagement with places, their experience of them and the qualities they ascribe to them, all of which are of fundamental importance in their lives. Study of the content must be embedded in two contrasting places, one to be local. The local place may be a locality, neighbourhood or small community either urban or rural.

Starting points...

Interactive: Changing Places – a good story map introduction – work your way through <https://focusschoolwilton.maps.arcgis.com/apps/Cascade/index.html?appid=f10c512164d0498d8f3bcbfad8ae61d39>

Reading: Changing Places – a good starting point read <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>

Video: Changing Places – watch both parts – “Slumming it” – Dharavi

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Im0tHRs9Bng>

Contemporary urban environments (Year 12)

This optional section of our specification focuses on urban growth and change which are seemingly ubiquitous processes and present significant environmental and social challenges for human populations. The section examines these processes and challenges and the issues associated with them, in particular the potential for environmental sustainability and social cohesion.

Starting points...

Reading – a very good case study of London

<https://www.latitudegeography.org/london-case-study.html>

Reading – evaluating the success of the Olympic regeneration

<https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2017/jul/27/london-olympic-park-success-five-years-depends>

Video – sustainable cities

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pUbHGI-kHsU>

Global Systems and Governance (Year 13)

This section of our specification focuses 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.

Starting points...

Video – good overview of some key parts of the unit

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iBntOrLfnAs>

Interactive – An excellent quiz to get you thinking about global issues

<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/ng-interactive/2020/jan/15/environment-inequality-hunger-which-global-problems-would-you-fix-first>

Reading – An interesting article about the world regions driving the global economy

<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2019/09/ranked-megaregions-driving-global-economy>

NEA: Non-examined assessment

Your independent investigation

All students are required to undertake fieldwork in both physical and human geography. Students then 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 you relating to any part of the specification content.

•• 3,000 – 4,000 words •• 60 marks •• 20 % of A-level •• marked by teachers and moderated by AQA

Take a look at the exemplars and start thinking about which aspects of the course you might wish to base your investigation on. We usually start work on this in the summer term of Year 12.

<https://filestore.aqa.org.uk/resources/geography/AQA-70373-NEA-G.PDF>

<https://filestore.aqa.org.uk/resources/geography/AQA-70373-NEA-ESI.PDF>

<https://filestore.aqa.org.uk/resources/geography/AQA-70373-NEA-TP.PDF>