

# GCSE Geography

# Exam Board: AQA

## **Subject overview:**

Studying geography gives students the opportunity to travel the world through the classroom, learning about both natural and social sciences along the way. They will understand how geography impacts everyday life and discover the key opportunities and challenges facing the world.

How our students experience the world, where they are from and their relationship with our global community and the environment around them is essential to their learning in the geography classroom. Their perspective is key, so we think it is important to describe geography through them:

‘Geography is one of those lessons that makes you realise how the world works and it gives you that grounding before you even begin to go places. It opens your eyes to things around you and gives you a look at how cultures work and how the world can be deadly as well as beautiful. It’s so inspiring and surrounds us in everyday life. This is why I think geography is so crucial to learn.’ Martin from Kent, Royal Geographical Society

GCSE geography is designed to allow a large number of diverse topics to be studied, such as urban issues, world development, extreme environments, rivers, and natural hazards – to name but a few. The course will give you the chance to get to grips with some of the most important and relevant geographical issues challenging our world today, and understand the social, economic and physical forces which shape and change our lives. This diversity also allows all students to find topics they are interested and engaged in. Geography helps you to make sense of the world around you.

‘The study of geography is about more than just memorising places on a map. It’s about understanding the complexity of our world,

appreciating the diversity of cultures that exists across continents. And in the end, it’s about using all that knowledge to help bridge divides and bring people together.’ – Barack Obama

## **Why should I choose Geography?**

Geography is a broad-based academic subject which will open up options for you in your future. Employers and universities see geography as a robust academic subject rich in skills, knowledge and understanding. As a subject linking the arts and the sciences it is highly flexible in terms of what you can combine it with, both at GCSE and A Level.

## **How will Geography help me? What skills will I develop?**

Students will also develop academic and life skills from writing, teamwork and communication to analytical skills. There are so many ways of learning in geography. It is very practical, with opportunities to learn new skills such as modern computer-based mapping (called GIS), map skills, interpreting photographs, fieldwork skills, presenting, role play and debating techniques. You will improve your literacy through your report writing and written work, and make practical use of your numeracy skills when you interpret data and construct graphs. Fieldwork, or working outside the classroom, is a really important part of geography. Whether you go locally or get the chance to travel further away, it will be a brilliant opportunity to experience some of the things you have learnt about in class, see things differently and of course have fun.

## What does the course involve? What will I study?

This exciting and relevant course studies geography in a balanced framework of physical and human themes and investigates the link between them.

Students will travel the world from their classroom, exploring case studies in the United Kingdom (UK), higher income countries (HICs), newly emerging economies (NEEs) and lower income countries (LICs). Topics of study include climate change, poverty, deprivation, global shifts in economic power and the challenge of sustainable resource use. Students are also encouraged to understand their role in society, by considering different viewpoints, values and attitudes.

The subject content is split into four units: Living with the physical environment, Challenges in the human environment, Geographical applications and Geographical skills. In the first two units, the content is split into sections, with each section focusing on a particular geographical theme such as The Challenge of Natural Hazards, and the Changing Economic World. The third unit sets out the requirements for fieldwork and issue evaluation. The final unit sets out the geographical skills that students are required to develop and demonstrate.

## How will I be assessed?

You will be assessed through three different exams in Geography at GCSE.

GCSE Geography Exams

Read about the skills involved in the different Assessment Objectives (AOs) here:

<https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/geography/gcse/geography-8035/scheme-of-assessment>

What's involved?	Overall
<p><b>Paper 1 : Unit 1</b></p> <p><b>'Living with the physical environment'</b> – 1 hour 30 minutes</p> <p>This exam will test your knowledge and understanding of physical geography, which focuses on the natural environment and how it is interconnected with human activity such as the impacts of earthquakes, deforestation in tropical rainforests,</p>	<p><b>35%</b></p> <p>88 marks (including +3 SPaG)</p>
<p><b>Paper 2 : Unit 2</b></p> <p><b>'Challenges in the human environment'</b> – 1 hour 30 minutes</p> <p>This exam will test your knowledge and understanding of human geography, which focuses on the processes that occur in urban spaces, the journey that countries are on in developing, and how resources are essential to successful living.</p>	<p><b>35%</b></p> <p>88 marks (including +3 SPaG)</p>
<p><b>Paper 3 : Unit 3</b></p> <p><b>'Geographical applications and Geographical skills'</b> – 1 hour 15 minutes</p> <p>This final exam will test your knowledge and understanding of a pre-release booklet of sources focused on a current issue in the world of geography. It will also test your understanding of fieldwork, both unseen as well as completed by you as</p>	<p><b>30%</b></p> <p>76 marks (including +6 SPaG)</p>

### **How will I learn?**

In geography we have built a curriculum of engagement with a mix of teaching strategies and activities, including organising and breaking down information independently and in team work, spoken and written debate through analysing visual sources which are essential to the study of geography, and research-driven exploration. All of these strategies cater for diverse needs and motivate students.

Acknowledging and valuing what young people bring to the curriculum is an essential way of ensuring that the geography they learn is both meaningful and connected to their everyday lives; it is also the means by which we can build a bridge between young people and the curriculum to ensure that the geography they learn is a vehicle through which they make sense of their own lives as well as those beyond their immediate horizon. (Biddulph, 'Teaching Geography', 2010)

### **Careers – What could a qualification in Geography lead to?**

There has never been a more important time to use geographical knowledge and skills to pursue a career. Careers in geography are essential to leading our societies into a successful future, with exciting jobs such as climate analyst, meteorologist, pollution analyst and town planner to name but a few. None of the changes and challenges facing the UK and the world in the 21st century, including climate change, energy security and migration can be properly understood, let alone tackled, without geography. This is the discipline that connects the natural and the human, the local and the global and in doing so, enables us plan sustainably for the future. Whether your future career lies in the environmental sector, business, education, the natural or social sciences, the media, in geospatial industries or in travel, geography opens up a range of choices for your future work and career.

### **Careers summary:**

Geographical Association - <https://www.geography.org.uk/Jobs-and-careers-in-geography#5>

Royal Geographical Society - <https://www.rgs.org/professionals/>

Southampton University Geography Careers - [https://www.southampton.ac.uk/geography/undergraduate/careers/career\\_opportunities.page](https://www.southampton.ac.uk/geography/undergraduate/careers/career_opportunities.page)