

Transition to A Level Geography

Welcome to the next step in your journey as a geographer.

It is great that you have picked Geography at A Level! This pack contains a set of tasks and resources to prepare you to start an A Level in Geography. All the topics in the geography A level course are at their most interesting when linked to current events and issues in the news. Keeping up to date of global affairs is essential to be a geographer – you are expected to bring in up to date examples in your extended writing. Therefore, we ask you to follow and research key issues to ensure you are well informed and able to provide balanced perspectives.

The pack will touch on a range of key topic areas and some skills linked to A level Geography: Hazards, Glaciers, and Globalisation.

“The study of geography is about more than just memorising places on a map. It is about understanding the complexities of the world, appreciating the diversity of cultures that exist across continents. And in the end, it is about using all that knowledge to help bridge divides and bring people together.” Barack Obama.

Over your A level geographical studies you will be expected to read/ watch geography related material. You will have two separate books, one for human geography and one for physical geography. The snippets of geography you read and collect will be used to support your writing. Over the summer, you need to start scrapbooks for geography related to the different parts of the course and bring these to lesson in September. Carry out some research on the topics below. The Guardian Environment or World sections are great places to start. Then attempt the essays using your research.

Paper 1 - Physical Geography

Hazards

Key question to research: why do some tectonic events turn into disasters?

Nepal 2015 Ghorke Region and China Sichuan 2008 earthquakes show contrasting ideas. Both had a large spatial extent and were caused by tectonic movement in the Himalaya / Tibetan Plateau at the convergent collision plate boundary between Indian and Eurasian plates.

However, on a national scale China much more able to cope with disasters especially building regulation laws and ability to respond than Nepal – much poorer and weaker / unstable government.

Read this on China's management: <https://blogs.worldbank.org/eastasiapacific/four-years-on-what-china-got-right-when-rebuilding-after-the-sichuan-earthquake>

In Nepal secondary hazards were more the problem with huge numbers of landslides and avalanches occurring – blocking roads and preventing the delivery of aid to isolated communities. This continued for 2 years afterwards – recovery took much longer in Nepal.

Read this on Nepal's management: <https://www.fau.eu/2015/05/21/news/why-was-nepal-badly-prepared-for-the-earthquake-on-25-april-2015/> and <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2015/apr/29/nepal-earthquake-disaster-response-risk-management>

Then complete the essay:

Assess the importance of development in explaining how hazards become disasters.

Potential ideas that you could use as arguments to answer the question above.

- *The greater the vulnerability of the population the more significant the impacts.*
- *The higher the level of development of the country the lower the risk.*
- *The stronger the governance the lower the risk of disaster.*

Possible Counter-Arguments

- *The higher magnitude the natural event the more significant the impacts.*
- *Natural disasters can still occur in developed countries where human factors are much stronger. For example, in the Japan Tohoku tsunami in 2011.*
https://www.thegeographeronline.net/uploads/2/6/6/2/26629356/tohoku_geofile.pdf

Warming of Antarctica

In Year 12 you will study glaciated landscapes. Antarctica has the largest ice sheet on earth, which is experiencing unprecedented heatwaves. Some scientists are worried that as the world focuses on Covid-19, increased temperatures in the last two years are going unnoticed.

Read <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-51097309> and bullet point ideas on the points below. Bring these to lesson in September.

Read and collect evidence for:

- Increased warming in the continent.
- Which areas/ ice sheets are impacted most and why? Look at differences between East and West Antarctic ice sheets.
- How is scientific research done there?
- Impacts of warming on the continent.
- Why is Antarctica particularly vulnerable to climate change?
- The importance of the Antarctic Treaty in allowing us to use it for climate research.
- Consider how Antarctica should be used by people in the future, if at all?

Then complete the essay:

Evaluate the view that the Arctic environment is reaching a tipping point. *An environmental tipping point is a level of change that it can no longer recover from, an irreversible impact on the people and ecosystem of that place. Look for arguments in favour and against the statement above. This will be helpful <https://www.kcl.ac.uk/news/limit-global-warming-to-1.50c-and-halve-the-land-ice-contribution-to-sea-level-this-century>*

Paper 2 - Human Geography

Globalisation

Globalisation is the word used to describe the growing interdependence of the world's economies, cultures, and populations, brought about by cross-border trade in goods and services, technology, and flows of investment, people, and information. Countries have built economic partnerships to facilitate these movements over many centuries, but the term gained popularity after the Cold War in the early 1990s.

Globalisation defines your everyday lives, it is as relatable, current and topical an issue as any you will find in today's world. Consider this quote from the great Martin Luther King Jnr:

“Did you ever stop to think that you can't leave for your job in the morning without being dependent upon most of the world? You get up in the morning and go to the bathroom and reach over for the sponge, and that's handed you by a Pacific Islander. You reach for a bar of soap, and that's given to you at the hands of a Frenchman. And then you go into the kitchen to drink your coffee for the morning and that is poured into your cup by a South American. And maybe you want tea: that's

poured into your cup by a Chinese. Or maybe you desire to have cocoa for breakfast, and that's poured into your cup by a West African. And then you reach over for your toast, and that's given you at the hands of an English-speaking farmer, not to mention the baker. And before you finish eating breakfast in the morning, you've depended on more than half the world. This is the way our universe is structured. It is its interrelated quality. We aren't going to have peace on earth until we recognize this basic fact of the interrelated structure of all reality."

He wrote this back in 1967, the world is far more interconnected and interdependent 53 years on!

To explore this topic, start by reading *Globalization – A Very Short introduction*. Part of this popular series by Manfred Steger. It is a very short book that won't take too long to read.

Then use the reading material to note arguments for and against forces of globalisation:

- This article covers 10 medical innovations which are saving lives across the world - <https://medicalfuturist.com/the-10-most-innovative-health-technologies-saving-millions-in-the-developing-world/>.
- Some disadvantages to the spread of technology: <https://thriveglobal.com/stories/why-developing-countries-will-be-left-behind-by-automation/>
- TNCs impact on the environment - Coca-Cola's record of water abstraction in developing countries and the criticism it has received: <https://waronwant.org/media/coca-cola-drinking-world-dry> and watch: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RWSjWWsFy9g>
- Impact of the global shift of manufacturing: <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2019/may/29/redcar-how-the-end-of-steel-left-a-tragic-legacy-in-a-proud-town>
- Benefits of the global shift of the service industry: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/morganhartley/2012/12/16/the-culture-shock-of-indias-call-centers/#1f84953972f5> – India's call centre workers, who massively benefit from outsourcing. AND <https://www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/2014/jun/19/outsourcing-extreme-poverty-africa-south-asia-call-centres-ddd>
- TNCs, or transnational corporations, are huge drivers of globalisation. One major criticism of TNCs from a social perspective, however, is their poor treatment of workers in developing countries <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3tf6qc51Kbw>
- Globalisation seems to have ushered in an era of increased global coherence and cooperation. <https://theconversation.com/globalization-may-actually-be-better-for-the-environment-95406>

Then complete the essay:

"Globalisation is undoubtedly a force for good." Assess this statement.

Just remember, you do not have to issue a blanket statement: "I agree fully" or "I do not agree at all" – Geography is a little more complicated than that: Even if you agree with the statement, you could argue globalisation is not a force for good everywhere nor for everyone (winner and losers).

Things to read or watch

MUST READ books:

Factfulness: Ten Reasons We're Wrong About the World – and Why Things Are Better Than You Think. By Hans Rosling, Ola Rosling, Anna Rosling Rönnlund

Prisoners of Geography. By Tim Marshall

Other books:

Divided by Tim Marshall

Globalization and its discontents – Book written by Joseph Stiglitz. A challenging, but interesting critique of globalisation.

The Revenge of Gaia – James Lovelock. Application of the Gaia Theory to climate change.

Climate Wars: The Fight for Survival as the World Overheats by Gwynne Dyer.

The White Tiger – Aravind Adiga. Novel using globalisation and its impact on India as a new superpower as its theme. Man Booker prize winner in 2008.

Some good geography sources or websites:

Edexcel textbook we will be using next year:

<https://global.oup.com/education/product/9780198366454/?region=uk>

Geography Review: <http://www.philipallan.co.uk/geographyreview/index.ht>

Geographical: <http://www.geographical.co.uk/Home/index.html>

The Guardian useful sections: <https://www.theguardian.com/uk/environment>,
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/globalisation>

The Royal Geographical Society – subject updates and many articles / lectures linked to the topics above. www.rgs.org

More specific articles and lectures that will broaden your geographical knowledge and understanding.

DON'T PANIC — Hans Rosling showing the facts about population

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FACK2knC08E&t=1583s>

What's hidden under Greenland's ice sheet?

https://www.ted.com/talks/kristin_poinar_what_s_hidden_under_the_greenland_ice_sheet/transcript?language=en

How can technology improve a country's vulnerability?

https://www.ted.com/talks/paul_conneally_digital_humanitarianism

