

A student's guide to the GCSE in

GEOGRAPHY A

What is GCSE Geography A all about?

- You live in the world – why not find out more about the **challenges** and **opportunities** it offers, and how to get **involved**?
- Discover how people are using different **environments**, both your own and those in other parts of the world
- Investigate issues of **sustainability** – will the Earth still be able to provide us with all the **resources** we take for granted now?
- How have different **landscapes** developed – what are the great natural forces involved?
- How do **tourists** affect the areas they visit – what are the benefits and challenges?
- What really causes 'natural disasters' like **floods**, **earthquakes** and **volcanoes**? How can people cope with them?

Will I enjoy this course?

You will enjoy this course if you want to study a subject that

- is relevant to the world you live in, and to your future
- encourages you to discuss **current affairs** and issues
- focuses on the **environment**
- involves **practical** work **outdoors**
- is studied through **investigation**, not just listening and reading
- develops a full range of **skills** that will be useful in other subjects you study, and in employment

How does it follow on from what I have learned before?

You have already developed a range of relevant skills and knowledge from your study of Geography. These will be of great help in GCSE Geography. The GCSE course will take you further. It will introduce you to new skills and new places and new ideas. You will also be able to apply what you are learning and understand more about how people's decisions shape the world we live in.

What about exams?

At the end of Year 11 you will take two exam papers, and hand in one item of coursework. Towards the end of August you will be given your results. These will be graded from A* to G.

The first paper tests the compulsory part of the course, and has an emphasis on skills, with mainly practical and short answer questions. You may have to complete a graph or sketch, for example, or find and use information from maps and photographs.

The second paper focuses more on the information you have learned on the course. There is a choice of questions, depending on which topics you have studied. Each question is broken down into a number of shorter parts.

What about the coursework?

You will do some fieldwork as part of your course, where you go out and put your skills and knowledge into practice. The information for this will not come from textbooks or videos, but will be an opportunity for you to investigate what is happening in the real world. You must write up a report of your investigation, including diagrams to present the information you have found out. This is marked by your teacher and the marks go towards your final exam result. You will have plenty of time to carry all this out, and it means that you won't just be judged on how well you do on one day in the exam.

What other skills might I develop?

Geography is an ideal subject for developing a full range of skills. You will learn how to research information from a range of sources and present it in a variety of ways, both written and in diagrams. You can get experience of manipulating data, using statistics and ICT software such as databases, spreadsheets and graphics packages. Your fieldwork will help you to develop the skills of organising your own time, and working and co-operating with others. You will also learn to review your own work and progress. These 'transferable' skills will not just be useful in your study of Geography, but will help you make progress in many of your other subjects too, both at GCSE and beyond. They are also skills that are highly valued by employers, and will be useful in the world of work.

What could I do next with GCSE Geography?

A GCSE in Geography is a stepping stone to a whole range of future opportunities. The skills you develop will support you in further studies and employment.

A good grade at GCSE will help you move on to any AS, A level or vocational A level course. If you enjoyed your Geography GCSE, you might want to continue with this subject, or study a related subject. Biology, Geology, Environmental Science, Government & Politics, Economics, Travel & Tourism and Leisure & Recreation all have close links with some of the material you studied for this GCSE.

Alternatively, you may wish to consider a work-related course like a BTEC First or National Award. Employment opportunities where your geographical skills will be particularly valued include journalism and media, the law, engineering, business management, ICT, environmental management, teaching, economic planning, marketing, leisure, recreation and tourism.