

Preparing for A-Level Geography at Guiseley School

Hoping to study Geography at A-Level?

Or maybe you are simply interested in taking some time to further your understanding of the geography you have studied at GCSE?

Here are some things you can do:

1. **Developing as a Geographer** (pages 2 – 6 of this document) – through general reading / watching videos / listening to podcasts etc. to develop your geographical knowledge and understanding
2. **Preparing for the A-Level Course** (pages 7 – 12 of this document) - 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, which means being able to see the bigger picture 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 Geography 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. You could keep a Geography Scrapbook (a digital one or a physical 'cut and paste' book) of "geography in the news".

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.

Here is the link to the summary of the AQA A-Level Geography specification:

<https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/geography/as-and-a-level/geography-7037/specification-at-a-glance>

The units studied on our AQA A-Level Geography course are:

Physical geography

1. Water and carbon cycles
2. Coastal systems and landscapes
3. Hazards

Human geography

4. Global systems and global governance
5. Changing places
6. Contemporary urban environments



Geography fieldwork investigation

3,000 word coursework based on fieldwork

1. Developing as a Geographer

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

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!

TED Talks <https://www.ted.com/talks>

If you haven't yet discovered TED Talks then NOW is the time to dip in and have a listen (and watch). Just search for a topic that you are interested in. Fantastic resource for A-Level Geography or just for widening your general interest!

PODCASTS

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

- **BBC Costing the Earth** – <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006r4wn/episodes/downloads> There are some great podcasts here to pick from on a wide variety of geographical issues (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 your Geography A-Level studies up-to-date with the latest geographical research – pick out some that interest you and give them a go!

BOOKS – how about asking for a book as a birthday present?!

- **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. £6.99 on Amazon

- **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. £9.99 on Amazon
- **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. £10.99 on Amazon

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/programmes/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>

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

- **The world's dirtiest river** (Unreported world) <https://www.channel4.com/press/news/unreported-world-shorts-worlds-dirtiest-river>

- **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>

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 (very strong language in parts)
- **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.
- **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 (2007) (15)** – based on the story of a university graduate who gives up all of his material possessions and journeys alone into the Alaskan Wilderness



At Guiseley School we follow the AQA A-Level. You will have two end of course examinations and one NEA (Non-Examined Assessment) i.e. an independent geographical fieldwork investigation coursework.

The link to the full AQA Geography specification is:

<https://filestore.aqa.org.uk/resources/geography/specifications/AQA-7037-SP-2016.PDF>

The two examined units in the AQA A-Level Geography are:

- Paper 1: Physical Geography with questions on:
Water and carbon cycle; Coastal systems and landscapes; Hazards
2.5 hours exam. Answer all questions. 40% of A-Level.
- Paper 2: Human Geography with questions on:

Global systems and global governance; Changing places; Contemporary urban environments.

2.5 hours exam. Answer all questions. 40% of A-Level.

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 a particular starting point, in the September of Year 12 we start with:
Coastal systems and landscapes (physical geography) and
Changing places (human geography).

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

UNIT 1 - PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY

At Guiseley School, we cover the following three topics for Unit 1.

Topic 1 – Coastal systems and landscapes

This section of our specification 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.

Starting points...

Videos: Time for Geography Lots of great clips to introduce you to various aspects of coasts: https://timeforgeography.co.uk/videos_list/coasts/

Reading: A detailed website that covers much of the specification content you'll be studying in this unit: <https://www.alevelgeography.com/coasts/>

Topic 2 – Carbon and water cycles

This section of our specification focuses on the major stores of water and carbon at or near the Earth's surface and the dynamic cyclical relationships associated with them.

These are major elements in the natural environment and understanding them is fundamental to many aspects of physical geography.

Starting points...

Video: You'll love Hank's introduction to carbon and water cycles:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2D7hZpIYICA>

Video: more from the excellent Time for Geography team:

https://timeforgeography.co.uk/videos_list/carbon-cycle/

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.tutor2u.net/geography/reference/carbon-and-carbon-stores-explained>

Reading: Introduction to the Water

Cycle <https://www.tutor2u.net/geography/reference/water-stores-and-cycles>

Topic 3 – Hazards

This section of our specification focuses on the lithosphere and the atmosphere, which intermittently but regularly present natural hazards to human populations, often in dramatic and sometimes catastrophic fashion. By exploring the origin and nature of these hazards and the various ways in which people respond to them, students are able to engage with many dimensions of the relationships between people and the environments they occupy.

Starting points...

Videos: National Geographic Top 10 Natural Hazards:

[10 DEADLIEST Natural Disasters of All Time](#)

Videos: here are those Time for Geography geographers again!

https://timeforgeography.co.uk/videos_list/plate-tectonics/

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

UNIT 2 – HUMAN GEOGRAPHY

At Guiseley School, we follow the AQA A-Level Geography specification and we cover the following topics for Unit 2.

Topic 1 - Changing Places

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. Students acknowledge this importance and engage with how places are known and experienced, how their character is appreciated, the factors and processes which impact upon places and how they change and develop over time. Through developing this knowledge, students will gain understanding of the way in which their own lives and those of others are affected by continuity and change in the nature of places which are of fundamental importance in their lives. Students study a local place (Guiseley) and a distant place (Stratford in Newham in the East End of London).

Starting points...

Interactive: Changing Spaces, Making Places – a good story map introduction – work your way through <https://focusschoolwilto.maps.arcgis.com/apps/Cascade/index.html?appid=f10c512164d0498d8f3bcfad8ae61d39>

Reading: What is place? <https://www.tutor2u.net/geography/reference/introduction-to-concept-of-place>

Reading: Some good links here between Changing Places and fieldwork.

<https://www.geography-fieldwork.org/a-level/place/placemaking/introduction/>

Video: The Time for Geography geographers look at what the city of Portsmouth means to different people (their “sense of place”):

https://timeforgeography.co.uk/videos_list/cities/location-importance-and-sense-place-uk-cities-portsmouth/

Topic 2: Contemporary Urban Environments

This 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.

Video: TED Talks are brilliant. Here is one on the future of cities.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IFjD3NMv6Kw>

Reading: this topic studies how city environments change over time. Clearly the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020 has had urban impacts.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/mar/26/life-after-coronavirus-pandemic-change-world>

Topic 3: Global systems and global governance

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.

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. Students engage with important dimensions of these phenomena with particular emphasis on international trade and access to markets and the governance of the global commons.

Video: one of the main case-studies on the Global Systems unit is the governance of the world's last great wilderness, the Antarctic, so there is lots of video scope here! BBC's Seven Worlds, One Planet is a good starting point: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/m0009tt8/seven-worlds-one-planet-series-1-1-antarctica>

Video: could we live in a borderless world? Have a listen to this TED Talk. https://www.ted.com/talks/parag_khanna_mapping_the_future_of_countries

Reading: The closest we have to a global government is the United Nations. <https://www.un.org/un70/en/content/history/index.html>

UNIT 3 – NON-EXAMINED ASSESSMENT (COURSEWORK)

At Guiseley School, we follow the AQA A-Level Geography specification and the third unit is an independent coursework based on fieldwork.

Students are required to undertake an independent investigation. This must incorporate a significant element of fieldwork. The fieldwork undertaken as part of the individual investigation may be based on either human or physical aspects of geography, or a combination of both. They may incorporate field data and/or evidence from field investigations collected individually or in groups. What is important is that students work on their own on contextualising, analysing and reporting of their work to produce an independent investigation with an individual title that demonstrates required fieldwork knowledge, skills and understanding.

The independent investigation must be based on a research question or issue defined and developed by the student individually to address aims, questions and/or hypotheses relating to any part of the specification content.

Reading: an excellent introduction and overview of the whole coursework process is summarised by the Field Studies Council: <https://www.geography-fieldwork.org/media/16632/geographical-investigations-hi-res.pdf>

Website: The FSC website is a good place to get some ideas for your coursework <https://www.geography-fieldwork.org/>



Countries with McDonald's
Countries without McDonald's

