



St Mary Redcliffe  
and Temple School

# Geography



# Geography



Exam board: Edexcel / Pearson

Specification no: 8GEO (AS) / 9GEO (A Level)

**This is a two year linear A level course** - The AS content forms the first half of the A level content and can be assessed at the end of Year 12 to provide an AS Level qualification if the student is dropping the subject and wishes to secure a grade at this point. Otherwise the two years of content are assessed at the end of Year 13 to give the A level grade.

## Course Delivery:

The teaching of Geography involves significant amounts of class discussion and debate, examination of case studies, research, presentation and manipulation of primary fieldwork and secondary research sources as well as analysis of statistical information alongside learning of key concepts that underpin the subject.

## Course Content:

At key stage 5, students will study a combination of core and optional topics that will give them a broad understanding of physical processes, human activities and the complex interactions between them.

At AS level students will investigate a balance of physical and human components. Unit 1 'Dynamic Landscapes' examines tectonic processes and hazards and landscape systems with a focus on coastal environments (on which 1 day's fieldwork will be based). This fieldwork considers human impact on coastal locations and processes in South Wales. Unit 2 'Dynamic Places' examines human topics including Globalisation and Regeneration (on which 1 day's fieldwork will be based). This fieldwork considers deprivation in coastal communities. The units are examined in two equally weighted exams for those students who choose to take an AS level examination. Fieldwork is examined in both papers at this level.

At A level students additionally study two further units. Unit 3 'Physical Systems and Sustainability' investigates the Water Cycle and Water Insecurity alongside the Carbon Cycle and Energy Insecurity and finally Climate Change Futures. Unit 4 examines 'Human Systems and Geopolitics' with a focus on Superpowers and Global Development, examining Health, Human Rights and Interventions. The 4 units are

assessed in two terminal exams, paper 1 and 2 composing 60% of the overall assessment whilst paper 3 worth 20% of the full A level is a synoptic paper which draws from the whole course and which is much more skills based as well as focused around a synoptic theme.

A Coursework investigation (around 6000 words in length) composes the final 20% of the A level assessment. This will be based around data collection during a **compulsory 5-day fieldwork programme that takes place in the last week of the summer term of year 12. Please note that this takes place during activities week and that students who choose geography will be expected to prioritise this over any other activities week offering.** Student are encouraged to investigate an area of personal interest. Recent investigations have considered topics as diverse as gentrification, inequality, coastal management, regeneration projects, sustainable transport, diversity, social exclusion and sand dune ecology.

Understanding and applying Geographical skills will remain a key feature of the course and will ideally place students to deal with many of the skills required in the work place. Alongside collection, presentation, analysis and evaluation of primary data and secondary research, students will be challenged to synthesise a wide range of sources such as digital maps, graphical results, images, cartoons, Geographical Information Systems (GIS) and statistical calculation. Mathematical calculations and statistical analysis will be integrated throughout the course.

Fieldwork remains a compulsory feature of Geography and a highlight of the course. It will provide students with first-hand opportunities to experience human and physical processes in the field as well as to develop a wide range of techniques to collect data in the field and analyse it at a later point. At AS level, 2 individual days of fieldwork will be undertaken and will be assessed within the AS level examination. However, at A Level, fieldwork will only be assessed through a coursework component that will compose 20% of the final A Level grade and which may be based around short residential. At both levels, fieldwork will assess both physical and human components as well as the interaction between them.

It is important to note that there will be costs associated with fieldwork. This cost may be considerable at A2 level (estimated to be around £250-£300) because specialist Field Studies Council staff will be used in order to give students the best possible support. This cost should be considered before starting the course although support is available for those from low income backgrounds. It is also important to note that **A level fieldwork will take place in the last full week of the summer term of year 12.**

**Entry requirements:**

If the subject is taken at GCSE it should be passed at 5 or above and at least one English/Humanities/Social Science subject should be passed with a 6.

**Skills & personal qualities required / developed by the course:**

The course is highly topical and so both requires and develops an active interest in contemporary global situations. Students are expected to show initiative and demonstrate independent learning in the subject. Skills of analysis, synthesis, group-work, debate, decision-making, statistical analysis and IT are developed during the delivery of the course. Focus, discipline and organisation are key to managing the large workload. Passion, especially when considering issues around themes such as equality, diversity and environmental stewardship are also encouraged

**Visits / enrichment / resources /**

See above for major visits.

Additional short trips within the local environment also take place to trial basic fieldwork techniques including the immediate area

Students are given the opportunity to access competitions and regular lectures at the University of Bristol, and UWE (see below)

These opportunities not only help students to gain an insight into tertiary education and its demands but also a valuable insight into the university application process. Furthermore, many of our 6<sup>th</sup> form students also volunteer to provide in-class support at key stage 3 or 4 or one-to-one mentoring of struggling GCSE students.

Both our mentoring and university lecture programme provide students with fantastic enrichment that supports any future personal statement.



### **Recommended reading / websites:**

<http://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/edexcel-a-levels/geography-2016.html>

[www.geography.org.uk](http://www.geography.org.uk)

[www.geographyinthenews.org](http://www.geographyinthenews.org)

[www.rgs.org](http://www.rgs.org)

<http://www.bristolga.org.uk/current-programme/>

National Geographic magazine

Geography Review magazine

New Scientist magazine

Any current affairs journal or newspaper

### **Frequently asked questions:**

In this section we try to summarise those questions we always get asked at open evenings

#### **Is Geography popular at Redcliffe?**

It seems so. We run 3 classes usually with 20+ students each in them and are often full at the start of year 12. Most students also choose to follow the subject through to the full A level which is great to see.

**Who will teach me?**

You will be taught by 2 members of staff in year 12 and 2 members of staff in year 13. These staff members may vary between years to match the expertise needed for different aspects of the course.

**How many lessons do I have a fortnight?**

You will have 10 lessons a fortnight. Nine of these are taught to you directly in a classroom whilst your '10th' lesson is one not directed by a member of staff but where a room is made available for you to complete independent study.

**Is Geography a lot of work?**

The answer generally is that Geography is quite a lot of work so demands organisation and focus. Being pro-active is essential to success.

**When do I complete any independent study / homework?**

We strongly suggest you use free periods as well as your 10<sup>th</sup> period as well as time at home. Those people who are disciplined at school always do better.

**Do I need to be proficient in IT and maths?**

It helps if you have a working understanding of Excel because ultimately you will need to graph data that you collect for coursework. However, we can support you through this. We use a basic G.I.S package as well but again help you navigate this. Similarly, you will be expected to undertake some basic maths skills such as calculating averages, percentage change, ranges and inter quartile ranges as well as completing statistical tests. All these are well supported in class and online.

**Are there trips?**

Yes. See above. They are compulsory. Financial support is available to help meet costs if payment is difficult.

**Is there much revision support?**

Yes. While you will be expected to be pro-active at shaping your own personal revision plan, we as a department have put a lot of work into supporting you. This includes topic tick lists, examples answers and interactive online quizzes.

## **Do many people go on to study geography at university?**

Obviously, this varies from year to year but generally we get a lot of students who continue to pursue the subject or a related course such as international relations at university and so we are well-placed to provide additional support and advice during any application process. We have had students pursue courses at a huge number of establishments across the UK but also as far afield as the USA and Australia.

## **How is geography considered in the working world?**

This is always an important question to ask. It is extremely well-regarded and valued in the work place partly due to the fact it is a rigorous course at A Level and beyond but also due to the breadth of skills it helps you to develop such as synthesis of data, not-to-mention the highly topical, contested issues it examines which are coming to dominate global agendas.

For further information: Contact  
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