

Developing as a geographer and preparing for A Level Geography

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?

There are number of things you can do:

1. **Developing as a geographer** – through general reading around / watching videos / listening to podcasts etc. to develop your geographical knowledge and understanding
2. **Preparing for the A Level Course** 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, being able to see the greater overview 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 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.

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.

DEVELOPING AS A GEOGRAPHER

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

i. 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!

ii. PODCASTS

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

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

iii. ONLINE NEWS ARTICLES

Remember you can make use of the local libraries digital library service for books – you don't have to access hard copies.

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.

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.

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.

iv. 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/iplayer/group/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 **ITV Hub**

- **Britain Underwater: Fighting the Floods** <https://www.itv.com/hub/britain-underwater-fighting-the-floods/7a0157>
- **Joanna Lumley's Hidden Caribbean: Havana to Haiti** <https://www.itv.com/hub/joanna-lumleys-hidden-caribbean-havana-to-haiti/2a7578>

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

- **When the Immigrants Leave** (Dispatches) <https://www.channel4.com/programmes/dispatches/on-demand/69555-001>
 - **China's Lonely Hearts** (Unreported World) <https://www.channel4.com/programmes/unreported-world/on-demand/56011-011>
 - **The world's dirtiest river** (Unreported world) <https://www.channel4.com/programmes/unreported-world/on-demand/58399-001>
 - **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>
 - **The week Britain Froze** (Dispatches) <https://www.channel4.com/programmes/dispatches/on-demand/66548-007>
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v. 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 (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

Preparing for A Level Geography at Bishop Challoner

At Bishop Challoner we follow the AQA A Level. You will have two examined units and one NEA (Non-Examined Assessment) i.e. an independent geographical investigation.

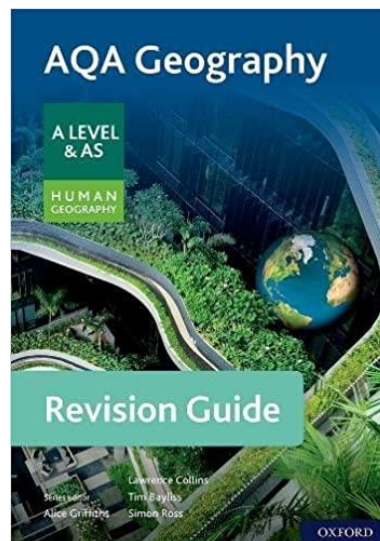
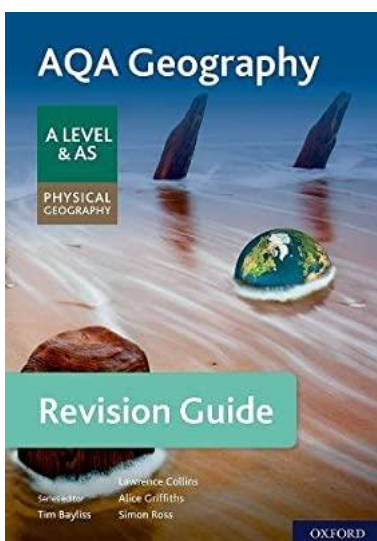
If you want to know where to start, in the September of Year 12 we start with Hazards in Physical Geography and Contemporary Urban Environments in Human Geography

An Overview of A Level Geography at Bishop Challoner:

Topic	1	2	3	4	5
Year 12					
Physical	Hazards	Hazards	Hazards	Coastal Systems and Landscapes	Coastal Systems and Landscapes
Human	Urban environments	Urban environments	Urban environments/Changing Places	Changing Places	Changing Places
Year 13					
Physical	Water and Carbon Cycles	Coursework	Water and Carbon Cycles	Revision	Revision
Human	Changing Places	Global Systems and Governance	Global Systems and Governance	Revision	Revision

A good idea would be to purchase the recommended revision guides ahead of next year. You can start your reading around the subject and even begin to make revision material such as mind maps, flash cards and practice exam questions. This would put you at a huge advantage over previous year groups given the extra time you now have.

The revision guides that we would recommend are:



<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Geography-Level-Human-Revision-Guide/dp/0198432690>

https://www.amazon.co.uk/Geography-Level-Physical-Revision-Guide/dp/0198432666/ref=sr_1_9?dchild=1&keywords=AQA+Geography+for+A+Level+%26+AS+Human+Geography+Revision+Guide&qid=1585307080&s=books&sr=1-9

Here is a link the AQA specification for the A Level course:

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

Physical Geography

Hazards:

This optional 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. Study of this section offers the opportunity to exercise and develop observation skills, measurement and geospatial mapping skills, together with data manipulation and statistical skills, including those associated with and arising from fieldwork.

- The concept of hazard in a geographical context
- Plate tectonic
- Volcanic hazards
- Seismic hazards
- Storm hazards
- Fires in nature

Useful Activities to carry out:

Video: Power of the Planet (Volcanoes) <https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x5af4kg> - a great introduction to the work we will be doing on volcanoes.

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>

USGS Natural Hazards – FAQ <https://www.usgs.gov/faq/natural-hazards> – some excellent reading here in bitesize chunks – well worth exploring.

Explore the following websites:

<http://coolgeography.co.uk/>

<https://www.senecalearning.com/blog/free-aqa-a-level-geography-revision/>

<https://www.s-cool.co.uk/a-level/geography>

<https://studywise.co.uk/a-level-revision/geography/>

<https://www.tutor2u.net/geography/collections/a-level-geography-revision-quizzes>