

GEOGRAPHY

CASE STUDY

Is this the right subject for me?

GCSE Geography is a challenging GCSE so commitment and a real interest in the subject are needed. The GCSE will give you the chance to get to grips with some of the big questions which affect our world and understand the forces and processes which shape and change the planet.

You will receive excellent learning opportunities from outstanding geography teachers and first rate resources to help you achieve. The Geography Department has been nationally recognised for its excellence in teaching and learning by the Geographical Association and the Prince's Teaching Institute.

What will I learn?

The world is always changing. We have decided that the specification that gives you the best chance to learn about these changes is the AQA GCSE Geography specification. Students will travel the world from their classroom, exploring case studies in the United Kingdom, higher income countries, newly emerging economies and lower income countries. Topics of study include climate change, poverty, deprivation, global shifts in economic power and the challenge of sustainable resource use. Students are also encouraged to understand their role in society, by considering different viewpoints, values and attitudes. The subject content is split into four areas:

Living with the Physical Environment

This unit is concerned with the dynamic nature of physical processes and systems, and human interaction with them in a variety of places and at a range of scales. The aims of this unit are to develop an understanding of the tectonic, geomorphological, biological and meteorological processes and features in different environments, and the need for management strategies governed by sustainability and consideration of the direct and indirect effects of human interaction with the Earth and the atmosphere. The topics studied in this unit are The Challenge of Natural Hazards, Ecosystems, Tropical Rainforests, Hot Deserts, Physical Landscapes of the UK, Coasts and Rivers.

Geography Applications

This section contributes a critical thinking and problem-solving element to the GCSE. The assessment will provide students with the opportunity to demonstrate geographical skills and applied knowledge and understanding by looking at a particular issue derived from the specification using secondary sources.

The issue will arise from any aspect of the compulsory sections of the subject content but may extend beyond it through the use of resources in relation to specific unseen contexts. Students will develop a critical perspective on the issue studied, consider the points of view of the stakeholders involved, make an appraisal of the advantages and disadvantages, and evaluate the alternatives.

Challenges in the Human Environment

This unit is concerned with human processes, systems and outcomes and how these change both spatially and temporally. They are studied in a variety of places at various states of development. The aims of this unit are to develop an understanding of the factors that produce a diverse variety of human environments; the dynamic nature of these environments that change over time and place; the need for sustainable management; and the areas of current and future challenge and opportunity for these environments. The topics studied in this unit are Urban Issues and Challenges, The Changing Economic World and The Challenge of Resource Management.

Misha, Year 11

I chose Geography for GCSE as it helped with my knowledge of cultures and environments around the world. It also helped me to understand what is affecting our everyday life.

My favourite part of the course has been learning about ecosystems, specifically the tropical rainforest. I was interested in how it plays an important role in keeping our planet healthy by providing 20% of the world's oxygen and how plants and animals have adapted to this biome.

I have also enjoyed learning about urbanisation because I was intrigued with what caused an increase in population in the world and why people are drawn to live in cities.

I'm planning to do biomedical science in the future and Geography will help me with this as it will help with the study of conditions required to support human life.

Year 9 should focus in lessons as they contain important content but they should also enjoy the subject as well.



CASE STUDY

Steve, Year 11

Geography teaches you about the processes and problems affecting lives today and considers the solutions on how to tackle these for the future. I really enjoyed the nature of this subject at KS3, and it was what attracted me to choosing this subject for GCSE.

It was really interesting studying tropical rainforests and their importance to the world. I also enjoyed learning about Birmingham, and to explore and develop new knowledge on an otherwise hidden side to the city.

In the future, I plan to become a research scientist, and the wealth of knowledge Geography has provided will really support me. Geography links really well to the sciences and there is lots of cross over with Biology in particular.

The course has educated me on how Britain's Jurassic Coast is under threat of erosion and how this amazing stretch of coast has formed over time.

I highly advise Year 9 students to make revision resources for topics before topic tests, and to complete practise questions beforehand.



Fieldwork

Students will undertake two geographical enquiries, each of which will include the use of primary data, collected as part of a fieldwork exercise. The two enquiries will be carried out in contrasting environments and show an understanding of both physical and human geography. In at least one of the enquiries students will show an understanding about the interaction between physical and human geography. There is no controlled assessment of this fieldwork; students will be examined on their fieldwork experiences and findings in Paper 3.

Geographical Skills

Students are required to develop and demonstrate a range of geographical skills, including map, graphical, numerical and statistical skills. Skills will be assessed in all three written exams.

How will I be assessed?

You will have three examinations.

Paper 1: Living with the physical environment: 90 minutes

Paper 2: Challenges in the human environment: 90 minutes

Paper 3: Geographical applications: 75 minutes

What do I need to know, or be able to do, before taking this course?

You will have learned a number of geographical skills and a body of geographical knowledge and understanding at Key Stage 3. These will be developed further during the GCSE course to give you a deeper understanding of the world. Your previous study of geography will have helped prepare you to think like a geographer.

What can I do after I've completed the course?

Geography really is an education for life. Employers and universities value the broad range of transferable skills that geography delivers. A GCSE in Geography is excellent preparation for a career in a vast number of areas which includes economics, planning, resource management, tourism, environmental management, development, law, geo engineering, finance, geology, energy, research and education. Geography is a very well regarded academic subject, where you will gain many transferrable skills that can be used throughout your careers.

Next steps!

If you would like to find out more about the issues and topics that modern geographers study visit the following sources:

The Geographical Association website: <http://www.geography.org.uk/>

Royal Geographical Society website: <http://www.rgs.org/HomePage.htm>

Have a look at some of the things we have done this year on our twitter page: @BCGeogDept

**For further information contact:
Your subject teacher or Mr Mullins**