

Preparing for A Level Geography or want to develop your Geography further?



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!

Freakonomics Radio – <https://freakonomics.com/archive/> A brilliant catalogue of podcasts with a huge range of topics that are all informative, thought-provoking, and always backed up by academic research.

iii. BOOKS

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>

The following are all available on **Netflix**

- **The Impossible** - True story about the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami
- **72 Dangerous Places to Live** - Get up close and personal with avalanches, fiery volcanoes and other natural disasters and learn why some people choose to live in their destructive paths
- **2012** - When a flood of natural disasters threatens to destroy the world, a divorced dad desperately attempts to save his family in this doomsday thriller
- **Into the Inferno** - With stunning views of eruptions and lava flows it captures the raw power of volcanoes
- **Lion** - An Indian man who was separated from his mother at the age of 5 and adopted by an Australian family return home determined to find his birth family
- **The Boy who harnessed the wind** - About water shortage in Malawi and a boy who makes a windmill to pump water
- **Rotten** - Docuseries travels deep into the heart of the food supply chain to reveal unsavoury truths
- **Cowspiracy** – Investigation into the food and meat industry
- **Explained** – An enlightening series that digs into a wide range of topics from women's rights to K-Pop
- **Dirty Money** – The pros and cons of a capitalist society and the role of government in corporations
- **Our Planet** – explores how climate change impacts all living creatures.
- **And much, much more!**

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
- **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 DEANERY HIGH SCHOOL

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

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 to know where to start, in the September of Year 12 we start with Hazards and Coasts. If you have any questions whilst exploring the following please do not hesitate to contact us.

Paper 1 - PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY

At Deanery High School, we cover the following three topics for Paper 1.

Topic 1 – Hazards

In this unit we explore how our understanding has evolved with regards to the seismic and volcanic activity that we experience through the movement of the earth's tectonic plates. We look at how these tectonic processes have shaped our world and created new landforms, helping to support life on earth. We also explore the potential impact of the hazards associated with earthquakes and volcanoes, hurricanes, wildfires and how as technology has developed we have improved our ability to predict and mitigate, whilst considering reasons for the variation in risks associated with hazards both spatially and over time. We will be looking at the concepts of risk and resilience and how these can be managed at various levels and to various degrees of success.

Starting points...

Video: Power of the Planet (Volcanoes) <https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x5af4k> - 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

Topic 2 - Water and the Carbon Cycle

Water and carbon are fundamental to supporting life on earth and are hence regarded as 'earth's life support systems. Water and carbon are cycled in both open and closed systems between the land, oceans and the atmosphere. The processes in the water and carbon cycles are inter-related. Human activity is increasingly threatening and altering water and carbon cycles for example through deforestation, ocean acidification, desertification etc. It is important that we look at global and national solutions to protect these.

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.khanacademy.org/science/biology/ecology/biogeochemical-cycles/a/the-carbon-cycle>

Reading: Introduction to the Water Cycle
<https://www.khanacademy.org/science/biology/ecology/biogeochemical-cycles/a/the-water-cycle>

Topic 3 – Coastal Systems

This unit 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. Our coastal unit fosters an informed appreciation of the beauty and diversity of coasts and their importance as human habitats and will exercise and develop observation skills, measurement and geospatial mapping skills, together with data manipulation and statistical skills.

Physics and Maths Tutor- [Coasts Revision](#) – A really good overview of what the course is about and some of the information you will learn next year.

Geofile on [Sediment Cells, Waves Types and Tides](#) – a good understanding of what the coastal system is made up of.

Geofile on different [Coastal processes](#)- understanding the different processes that create different landforms

Paper 2 – HUMAN GEOGRAPHY

At Deanery High School, we follow the AQA A Level specification and we cover the following topics for Paper 2.

Topic 1 - Changing Places

This unit explores the relationships and connections between people, the economy and society and their contributing to placemaking (i.e. creating places). The unit explores the meanings and representations attached to places and how place making takes place at a variety of scales. It explores places from a local to global level.

Starting points...

Interactive: Changing Spaces, Making Places – a good story map introduction – work your way through

<https://focusschoolwilton.maps.arcgis.com/apps/Cascade/index.html?appid=f10c512164d0498d8f3bcfad8ae61d39>

Reading: Changing Spaces- Making Places – a good starting point read

<https://pmt.physicsandmathstutor.com/download/Geography/A-level/Notes/OCR/Changing-Spaces-Making-Places/Set-A/Notes%20on%20Changing%20Places,%20Making%20Places%20-%20OCR%20Geography%20A-level.pdf>

Topic 2 - Global Systems and Governance

This unit 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.

Starting points...

Physics and Maths Tutor – A really good overview of what the course is about and some of the information you will learn next year. <https://pmt.physicsandmathstutor.com/download/Geography/A-level/Notes/AQA/Global-Systems-and-Global-Governance/Detailed%20Notes%20-%20Global%20Systems%20and%20Governance%20-%20AQA%20Geography%20A-level.pdf>

Antarctica Websites: <https://www.coolantarctica.com/index.php>

Governing Climate Change – World Agreements: <https://www.ipcc.ch/> and <https://unfccc.int/>

Topic 3 – Contemporary Urban Environments

This unit focuses on urban growth and change which are seemingly universal processes and present significant environmental and social challenges for human populations. We examine these processes and challenges and the issues associated with them, in particular the potential for environmental sustainability and social cohesion.

Starting points...

Reading: Read the excellent article on mega and meta cities by Mark Rowe (2014)
<https://geographical.co.uk/magazine/item/1170>

Video: Andrew Marr Megacities – Cities on the Edge
<https://vimeo.com/299721485>

A Level Geography Teachers

Any questions or queries, please don't hesitate to contact us

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