

Bridging the GCSE to A Level Geography Gap

Hoping to study Geography at A level? Or interested in just furthering your knowledge of Geography post the GCSEs?

There are a number of things you can do:

1. **Developing as a geographer** – through general reading around/ watching videos/listening to podcasts etc the geography subject to develop your geography knowledge and understanding.
2. **Become a News Buff**- Watch the news- BBC news between 6am-9am or at 6pm. Or get on the BBC news app? Other websites such as the Guardian, The Independent, The Times. Create a Geography in the News Diary of all things that are relevant to what you are studying?
3. **Preparing for the A Level Course**- Starting to explore the topics and their foundations in which they will be studied in the A Level Course.

To be a great geographer, you will need to develop the ability to think synoptically, being able to see the greater overview and how everything we study in Geography links together. Geography is not just about the studying people and landscapes, it is also the relationships that exists between people and their environment.

How can I develop as a Geographer before September?

Below are some links to podcasts, websites, books and even films which provide a great way of staying inspired and engaging with Geography:

PODCASTS:

- **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 climate change, carbon, urban greening, deforestation, alternative powers, 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.
- **Links to general podcasts**
- <https://eternalexploration.wordpress.com/2016/01/04/top-10-podcasts-for-geography-students/> - this has a number of different links to geography podcast, specifically targeted to Geography students. Definitely recommend the TED talks.

BOOKS:

Why not try some Geographically themed books/magazines:

- **[Prisoners of Geography](#) by Tim Marshall** – an insightful book which helps understanding how the physical geography impacts on political reality and really helps to understand how decisions of world leaders have been shaped by geography- a good introduction to Geopolitics
- **[Geography Review Magazines](#)**: Subscribe for £40 and you will get 4 up to date magazines with articles that will be really relevant to the topics that you are studying.

Fieldwork – Fieldwork is currently a no-no, but during lockdown 1 the Field Studies Council are offered live fieldwork sessions. These are now available to watch and are a great way of finding out more about fieldwork generally (especially given this GCSE cohort’s limited access to it!).



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.

This is by no means exhaustive, but here are a few ideas:

- **The Americas with Simon Reeve** <https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episodes/m00095p0/the-americas-with-simon-reeve> The first episode in Alaska/Canada is particularly good for Resource Security looking at energy.
- **Simon Reeve around the World** <https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/group/p06rrnkm> The Russia series is really interesting.
- **Joanna Lumley's Hidden Caribbean: Havana to Haiti** <https://www.itv.com/hub/joanna-lumleys-hidden-caribbean-havana-to-haiti/2a7578>
- **Race across the World** → <https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/m000g6nt/race-across-the-world-series-2-episode-1>
- **Andrew Marrs Megacities** → <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b011qmcl/episodes/guide>
- **Dispatches** → <https://www.channel4.com/programmes/dispatches/on-demand/67256-001>

Geography on NETFLIX, DVD or YOUTUBE:

- **Before the Flood**- A film presented by Leonardo DiCaprio- exploring climate change and looking at what needs to be done today to prevent catastrophic disruption
- **Our Planet Netflix Series**- Explores how climate change impacts all living creatures
- **Blood Diamond** – looks at the diamond trade in Sierra Leone
- **See the separate Geog Netflix document for more!**

What should I do with the News that I am Watching?

You should be regularly watching the news to keep you up to date with what is happening in relations to the inter-relationship between people and the environment. You will be really surprised how many of the news bulletins relate to what you are studying. Interestingly, we study disease at A level as part of the Population & Environment unit, so lots of the information on Covid-19 is not only relevant, but also useful for your geographical studies.

- **BBC NEWS:** <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news> - an excellent source of up to date articles- explore the headings such as Science, UK, WORLD and other stores
- **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.
- **THE CONVERSATION:** <https://theconversation.com/uk> - Really useful to support many of your A Levels. Up to date articles from academics and specialists in the field written in a way that is accessible to all, summarising the key points in a short but insightful articles.

Buy yourself a [Scrapbook](#) and either cut out the headline from a newspaper/print it off/ or just write it in your book and summarise the following:

- What are the key things that the article is telling you about- can you summarise in up to 10 main points
- What part of Geography/what we study does this link to? (If you can, don't worry if not)
- Are there any keywords that you need to look into more or you feel would be useful for your studies.

Bring this with you for your first lesson in the September.

What does the A Level Course look like?

At A Level, we follow the AQA specification. You will have two exams; one physical exam and one human exam, and one Non-Examined Assessment- essentially a 3000-4000 word piece of coursework.

Physical Exam	Human Exam	NEA
This exam will be 2 hours and 30 minutes and is worth 120 marks	This exam will be 2 hours and 30 minutes and is worth 120 marks	This is an independent enquiry meaning that it is driven by you. You will be given a NEA mentor to support you but we will not be able to

Water and Carbon (36 marks)	Global Governance (36 marks)	<p>mark formally and give this back to you. It will be mentor meeting driven.</p> <p>You will need to formulate a title and hypotheses from a topic that is studied on the AQA specification. You will then need to come up with methods to test your hypotheses, you will collect your own data and then present, analyse, conclude and evaluate your investigation.</p> <p>The deadline for this will be in October Half Term of Year 13.</p> <p>You will be taken out on 3 days fieldwork work to prep you for this.</p>
Coastal Environments (36 marks)	Changing Places (36 marks)	
Hazards (48 marks)	Population & Environment (48 marks)	

Pre Reading:

Water and Carbon:

- **Physics and Maths Tutor- [Water and Carbon Revision](#)** – A really good overview of what the course is about and some of the information you will learn next year.
- **Physics and Maths Tutor- <https://www.physicsandmathstutor.com/geography-revision/a-level-aqa/water-and-carbon-cycles/>** - some good links to other reading for the subject.
- **An introduction in to the [Water Cycle](#)**
- **An introduction in to the [Carbon Cycle](#)**
- **An introduction into the [Carbon Cycle](#)** - a good geofile which introduces you to the carbon cycle.
- **Water and Carbon [Overview](#)** – a piece of work from the Royal Geographical Society that summarises the course
- **Documentary on Climate change:**
 - o <https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/m0009drg/panorama-climate-change-what-can-we-do>
 - o <https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/m00049b1/climate-change-the-facts>
- **[News Articles](#) on Climate Change**

Coasts:

- **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.
- **Physics and Maths Tutor- <https://www.physicsandmathstutor.com/geography-revision/a-level-aqa/coastal-systems-landscapes/>** - some good links to other reading for the subject.
- **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
- **Geofile on [Mass Movement in the UK](#)** – a good link to different types of mass movement
- **Geofile on [Coastal Management](#)** – good comparison between different types of management strategies
- **Geofile on [Holderness Coast](#)** – A good look at a case study of a shore line management plan.

Hazards:

- **Physics and Maths Tutor- [Hazards Revision](#)** – A really good overview of what the course is about and some of the information you will learn next year.
- **Physics and Maths Tutor- <https://www.physicsandmathstutor.com/geography-revision/a-level-aqa/hazards/>** some good links to other reading for the subject.
- **Reading on [Vulnerability and Hazards](#)** – something that is different with the A Level is you need to be more aware of why people are vulnerable to Natural Hazards
- **Geofile on [Hazard Hotspots and Response](#)** – a A Level concept new to you on different ways to respond to Hazards
- **Haiti- [A multi-hazard Environment](#)**
- **Video: Power of the Planet (Volcanoes) <https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x5af4kg>** - a great introduction to the work on volcanoes we will be doing
- **Reading: [Plate Tectonics \(The Geological Society\)](#)** – This will be a good set up from your GCSE work to A Level and definitely worth navigating around the site <https://www.geolsoc.org.uk/Plate-Tectonics>

Global Governance

- **Physics and Maths Tutor- [Global Governance](#)** – A really good overview of what the course is about and some of the information you will learn next year.
- **Physics and Maths Tutor- <https://www.physicsandmathstutor.com/geography-revision/a-level-aqa/global-systems-and-governance/>** some good links to other reading for the subject.
- **A RGS summary of [Global Governance](#)** – A good overview of the course

- [Antarctica Case Study](#)
- The [Effects of Globalisation on the movement of people](#)

Changing Places

- **Physics and Maths Tutor- [Changing Places](#)** – A really good overview of what the course is about and some of the information you will learn next year.
- **Physics and Maths Tutor- <https://www.physicsandmathstutor.com/geography-revision/a-level-aqa/resource-security/>** some good links to other reading for the subject.
- **A RGS summary of [Changing Places](#)** – A good overview of the course
- **Geofile on the [Occupy Movement](#)**
- **[Changing Spaces –Making Places](#)** = A good powerpoint going through some of the content of the topic.

Population & Environment

- <https://www.physicsandmathstutor.com/geography-revision/a-level-aqa/population-and-environment/>
- <https://www.science.org.au/curious/earth-environment/population-environment>
- Both of the above are useful summaries
- <https://www.rgs.org/schools/teaching-resources/the-coronavirus/> - Gives info about the current pandemic.

It can be hard to know what to do with all of this reading and information. Here are some suggestions:

- Cornell note-taking – see <http://lsc.cornell.edu/study-skills/cornell-note-taking-system/>
- Mind maps / brainstorms
- Intelligent graffiti
- Bullet point summaries
- Design a text book or web page about that topic to summarise what you've learned
- Write a letter or article about the content

Just try and keep your mind engaged and interested! There are no right or wrong ways of doing this type of work in this unprecedented situation. Don't worry if not all of the reading makes sense (yet!) – some of it is aimed at very high level study and may not suit your current post-GCSE way of working. It will soon become clearer though once you have started your post-16 courses. Simply use the ones that make sense for now, and ignore those that don't yet.