

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. **Part A: Developing as a geographer** – through general reading around / watching videos / listening to podcasts etc. to develop your geographical knowledge and understanding
2. **Part B: 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.

Part A: 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

uptodate 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 uptodate 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 looking 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 Ganges with Sue Perkins - not on iPlayer at the moment but most can be seen on Youtube <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b09blcw9>

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>

v. GEOGRAPHICAL FILMS

(some are available online free – others may be available on providers such as Amazon Prime / Netflix etc.)

01. **Touching the Void** (15) (great for visualising glacial landscapes) – a powerful true story docudrama (strong language in parts)
02. **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.
03. **The Impossible (2012)** (12) – Movie based on real life events of the 2004 Boxing Day tsunami which killed 200,000 people.
04. **Slumdog Millionaire** (15) – based on life in the slums of Mumbai
05. **Our Planet** (Netflix series also on Youtube) – explores how climate change impacts all living creatures.
06. **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.
07. **Hotel Rwanda** (12) - the true story of a hotel manager who houses and protects Tutsi refugees – this is a hard-hitting film based on the Rwandan Conflict of the 1990s.
08. **The Last King of Scotland** (15) – another hard-hitting story, based on struggles faced by Uganda under the dictatorship of Idi Amin.
09. **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

Part B: PREPARING FOR A LEVEL GEOGRAPHY [Specifically for Bay House but with topics relevant to colleges and Sixth Forms using AQA]

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 Natural Hazards, Changing Places, Population and the Environment and finally, Coasts. In Year 13

we will start with Global systems and Governance, Water and Carbon cycles and finally, the NEA.

UNIT 1 - PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY

Topic 1 - Natural Hazards

In this unit you will explore various hazards within the atmosphere and lithosphere (the solid layers on our planet's exterior) including: volcanoes, earthquakes, tsunamis, tropical revolving storms and wildfires. We will investigate the origin and nature of these hazards, along with the impacts they have on differing societies and the eventual responses of various nations to these events.

Starting points...

Video: Power of the Planet (volcanoes) <https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x5af4kg> - a GREAT introduction to the work we will be doing on plate tectonics and volcanoes in year 12.

- A. **Video: Power of the Planet (atmosphere)**
<https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x5ah6gl> - a good introduction to the work we will be doing on weather related hazards such as tropical revolving storms as well as covering aspects of climate change which feeds into many of the topics at A Level.
- B. **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>
- C. **USGS Natural Hazards – FAQ** <https://www.usgs.gov/faq/natural-hazards> – some excellent reading here in bitesize chunks – well worth exploring

Topic 2 - Coasts

Coastal zones are dynamic environments with distinctive landscapes formed by the interaction of a range of wind, marine and terrestrial processes. Coastal environments are important to us as people, with about half of the world's population living within 50km of the sea. This makes these environments a crucial part of our studies as future life depends so heavily on their management.

Starting points...

1. **Reading: How does the geological structure of the coast influence the development of coastal landscapes?**
<http://www.bgs.ac.uk/discoveringGeology/geologyOfBritain/viewer.html>

2. **Reading: What effect will sea level rise have on coastlines?**
<http://www.theguardian.com/environment/sea-level>
3. **Reading: Coastal erosion and its future effects**
<http://www.bgs.ac.uk/discoveringGeology/climateChange/general/coastalErosion.htm>
4. **Reading: Why is Bangladesh so at risk from coastal flooding?**
http://coolgeography.co.uk/A-level/AQA/Year%2012/Rivers_Floods/Flooding/Bangladesh/Bangladesh.htm

Topic 3 - Water and Carbon cycles

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 interrelated. 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>

UNIT 2 – HUMAN GEOGRAPHY

Topic 1: Changing Places

Place is an everyday word and a key term within the study of Geography. As Geographers, we traditionally focus on the description of place and its locality using maps and statistics but a more accurate reading and writing of place must also include experience of place, whether

through direct interaction or indirect representation. This unit discusses all aspects of 'place', focusing on 2 case studies of places that have undergone change to a large degree.

Starting points...

- **Interactive: Changing Spaces, Making Places** – a good story map introduction – work your way through <https://focusschoolwiltomaps.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-SpacesMaking-Places/Set-A/Notes%20on%20Changing%20Places,%20Making%20Places%20-%20OCR%20Geography%20A-level.pdf>
- **Video: The Full Monty** - looks at the effects of deindustrialisation on a community. <https://www.amazon.co.uk/Full-Monty-Robert-Carlyle/dp/B00FYHUTCS>

Topic 2: Global Systems and Governance

Our world is more connected now than it ever has been. The global economy and society have altered significantly in recent years as a result of the process of GLOBALISATION. This is especially important given the current situation. The COVID-19 virus would have spread nowhere near as quickly had the globe not been as interconnected as it was/is. As a geographer, being able to recognise and explain links between economic, political and social change as well as engaging with contemporary world issues, is important for understanding both international trade and the workings of the global community.

Starting points...

See the 'cross topic' themes of climate change and migration at the bottom - these are 2 key themes that run through this topic

- ❑ **Reading: Human Rights** - a good starting point read <https://pmt.physicsandmathstutor.com/download/Geography/A-level/Notes/OCR/Human-Rights/Set-A/Notes%20on%20Human%20Rights%20-%20OCR%20Geography%20A-level.pdf>
- ❑ **Video: Seven worlds, one planet** (David Attenborough) - Antarctica - a large case study <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m0009tt8>
- ❑ **Video: World's worst place to be a woman?** (Stacey Dooley Investigates) <https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/b06mvwhb/stacey-dooley-investigates-worlds-worst-place-to-be-a-woman>

- ❑ **Video: Why climate change is a threat to Human Rights (TED Talk)**
https://www.ted.com/talks/mary_robinson_why_climate_change_is_a_threat_to_human_rights
- ❑ **Video: What if a single human right could change the world? (TED TALK)**
https://www.ted.com/talks/kristen_wenz_what_if_a_single_human_right_could_change_the_world

Topic 3: Population and the environment

Human population growth is the driver of many environmental, socio-economic and political challenges that we face in the world today. This topic examines the relationship between some key aspects of the physical environment and population numbers as well as people's health and well-being. It will in turn consider the impacts of population change on the environment.

Starting points...

See the 'cross topic' themes of climate change and migration at the bottom - these are 2 key themes that run through this topic

- **Video: Hans Rosling on population growth**
https://www.ted.com/talks/hans_rosling_global_population_growth_box_by_box?language=en
- **Video: Chris Packham's 7.7 billion people and counting**
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000dl6q>
- **Research: FAO** (Food and Agricultural Organisation) website
<http://www.fao.org/zhc/detail-events/en/c/413181/>

Cross topic themes -

Cross topic theme: Climate Change

“Climate Change is considered by many to be the planet’s greatest threat” (OCR). Climate change is a theme that carries through a few of our units... most notably the ‘population and the environment’ ‘global systems and governance’ and the ‘water and carbon cycles’ topics.

Starting points...

- ★ **Video: Climate Change the Facts** – David Attenborough
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/m00049b1/climate-change-the-facts>
- ★ **Video: Panorama – Climate Change: What can we do?**
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/m0009drg/panorama-climate-change-what-can-we-do>
- ★ **Video: The Disarming case to act right now climate change – Greta Thunberg (TED TALK)**
https://www.ted.com/talks/greta_thunberg_the_disarming_case_to_act_right_now_on_climate_change
- ★ **Reading: Climate Change** – The Guardian have an excellent section on Climate Change which is frequently updated with articles and is well worth dipping into
<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/climate-change>
- ★ **Reading: Climate Change – The Conversation** – a wealth of articles – frequently updated – highly recommended <https://theconversation.com/uk/topics/climate-change-27>

Cross topic theme: Migration

Migration is another theme that crosses various topics. Most notably ‘changing places’, ‘global systems and governance’ and ‘population and the environment’.

Starting points...

- ❖ **Reading: Introduction to Migration short notes**
<https://www.tutor2u.net/geography/reference/introduction-to-migration>
- ❖ **Reading: Global Migration – a good starting point read**
<https://pmt.physicsandmathstutor.com/download/Geography/A-level/Notes/OCR/Global-Migration/Set-A/Notes%20on%20Global%20Migration%20-%20Geography%20A-level.pdf>
- ❖ **Video: Escape to Europe: The migrant’s story – BBC Newsnight**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yZqdUBpHmhM>

- ❖ **Video: The truth about immigration in the UK 2014**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MHpIEJgevqM>
- ❖ **Video: Immigration: Is Britain Getting Full?**
<https://www.channel4.com/programmes/jon-snow-explains/on-demand/61877-004>
- ❖ **Video: Between Borders – America’s migrant crisis**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rxF0t-SMEXA>
- ❖ **Video: Fleeing Climate Change – The real environmental disaster** (forced migration due to climate change) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cl4Uv9_7KJE

Transitioning to A Level Geography - Bay House School & Sixth Form

Why study Geography A Level?

- You enjoy learning about people and their societies, economies, cultures and the environment.
- You have a rich curiosity surrounding key geographical questions. 'How will climate change affect me?' 'How long until we run out of finite resources' 'How would you reduce the impact of an earthquake?'
- You are keen to learn and develop a wide range of skills.
- You are seeking a broad based A Level, offering good and varied employment prospects.

What current world issues will you study?

Taking on a Geography A Level will give you an insightful walkthrough of how humans are having an impact on the physical world. The course will cover issues such as globalisation, cultural diversity, deforestation and overproduction of forested land through palm oil and manufacturing in the developing world. The issue of climate change is one that runs through most units you will study, which highlights its importance in the forefront of geographical discussion at present. You will get the opportunity to immerse yourself in the real, less talked about issues that are driving climate change and the scale of impact it is and will have worldwide.

What skills do you need?

Having an enquiring mind is important when studying Geography, as you will be constantly considering a range of questions and issues about people and place. Ensuring you feel comfortable with a range of skills such as map reading, data analysis and statistics will strengthen your ability to succeed at Geography A Level. In addition, being able to dissect debatable geographical issues and evaluate a range of arguments is a key catalyst for success at A Level, where you will begin to develop a writing style that supports and portrays this way of thinking and learning.

What can I do to get a preview of A Level Geography?

This web section from the GA provides general guidance on why you should study A level geography. It also contains extensive reading lists arranged by physical and human geography themes to help students find the most relevant and authoritative reading material in preparation for advanced study.

<https://www.geography.org.uk/Preparing-for-A-level-geography>

Topics

Hazards

•Natural Disasters podcast. Available at:

<https://www.parcast.com/naturaldisasters>

•Quake (mini drama podcast series):

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p052lph7/episodes/downloads>

•Natural Disasters: How to improve (RGS). Available at:

<https://www.rgs.org/schools/teaching-resources/natural-disasters-how-to-improve/>

•Haiti Quake: Ruin and recovery. Available at:

<https://www.npr.org/series/122522434/haiti-quake-ruin-and-recovery>

•Haiti: Recovery. Available at:

<https://podcasts.google.com/?feed=aHR0cDovL3VuZGlzcGF0Y2gubGlic3luLmNvbS9yc3M&episode=MDZjZDU3YmEtYjkzNi00NWVmLTliZmQtY2QzNDJiYmFhYWU4&ved=0CD8QzslCahcKEwi4sJqi7oipAhUAAAAAHQAAAAAQc&hl=en-GB>

•‘Can we predict volcanic activity?’ Available at:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-50729280>

•‘Mysterious tectonic fault found off California’. Available at:

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/science/2019/11/mysterious-tectonic-fault-zone-found-off-california-using-fiber-optics/>

•‘Quake split a tectonic plate in two, and geologists are shaken’. Available at:

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/science/2018/10/news-tectonic-plate-split-earthquakes-tsunamis-geology/>

•‘What are lost continents, and why are we discovering so many?’ Available at: <https://theconversation.com/what-are-lost-continents-and-why-are-we-discovering-so-many-126355>

•Disaster by Choice- Ilan Kelman. Available at: <https://www.amazon.co.uk/Disaster-Choice-actions-natural-catastrophes/dp/0198841345>

Coastal Systems and Landscapes

Water and Carbon

•Living Planet podcast. Available at: <https://www.dw.com/en/living-planet-environment-stories-from-around-the-world/a-19385797>

•Vegan World. Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000bmxs>

•Carbon Free Islands. Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m0009372>

•Cleaning up our air: The Guardian. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/science/audio/2019/oct/04/cleaning-up-our-air-science-weekly-podcast>

•Forests and the carbon cycle: RGS. Available at: <https://www.rgs.org/schools/teaching-resources/forests-and-the-carbon-cycle/>

•Disappearing Alps. Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b0b3cvr9>

•Water and Carbon Cycling: Royal Geographical Society. Available at: <https://www.rgs.org/CMSPages/GetFile.aspx?nodeid=6dc9f1c1-f92d-4c04-9f85-9985844a6a79&lang=en-GB>

•‘The Arctic’s thawing ground is releasing a shocking amount of dangerous gases’. Available at: <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/science/2020/02/arctic-thawing-ground-releasing-shocking-amount-dangerous-gases/>

•‘Desert crops thrive as aquifer shrinks’. Available at: <https://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/images/145975/desert-crops-thrive-as-the-aquifer-shrinks>

•**'Whales are vital to curb climate change'**. Available at:
<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2019/11/whales-carbon-capture-climate-change/>

•**Meat: A threat to our planet**. Available at:
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/m000bqsh/meat-a-threat-to-our-planet>

•**The Secret Life of Ice**. Available at:
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/b016fpyy/the-secret-life-of-ice>

•**Climate Change: The facts**. Available at:
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/m00049b1/climate-change-the-facts>

•**Planet Carbon: National Geographic**. Available at:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7lqZIR-OM48>

•**The hydrologic and carbon cycles**. Available at:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2D7hZplYICA>

Changing Places

Global Systems and Governance

Links to mass production and economic development in NEE's

- Reggie Yates in China - In the episode (link below) Reggie Yates visits Shenzhen in China, a special economic zone which is one of the Chinese economy's most important cities. Take a look at how many of the modern world economy and China's development is clearly personified by Shenzhen.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000bh9n>

Population and the Environment

Links to food insecurity and environmental degradation

- Apocalypse Cow: How Meat Killed the Planet - In a provocative documentary, environmental campaigner George Monbiot argues that the biggest problem driving us towards global disaster is how we feed ourselves, particularly on meat. An interesting watch and take on how the world is causing many social and environmental issues on a global scale. (Link below)

<https://www.channel4.com/programmes/apocalypse-cow-how-meat-killed-the-planet>

•The Development Podcast:

<https://open.spotify.com/show/3WJXPynY3ai2wOYJEmc4T8>

•The World Economic Forum Podcasts: <https://soundcloud.com/world-economic-forum>

•Planet Money- The Economy explained:

<https://www.npr.org/sections/money/?t=1585048489797&t=1585135821258&t=1587915820145>

•World Population Balance Podcasts:

<https://www.worldpopulationbalance.org/podcasts>

•Global Population Podcast, The Guardian:

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/audio/2011/jul/27/focus-podcast-population-growth>

•Health: <https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/audio-video/podcast/healthy-places>

•Hans Rosling- Don't Panic:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FACK2knC08E&t=494s>

•Hans and Ola Rosling- How not to be ignorant about the world:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sm5xF-UYgdg>

•Kim Preshoff- Population Pyramids: Powerful Predictors of the Future:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RLmKfXwWQtE>

•Bill Gates- The next outbreak- we are not ready:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Af6b_wyiwl

•How Pandemics Spread: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UG8YbNbdaco>