



Learning to fly in Geography

Geography is vitally important for understanding the world around us. Geographers question the world and seek to understand it. No other subject at school links so many factors together as one.

Geographers learn vital skills like map reading, problem solving, decision making. They learn to link scientific factors alongside sociological, psychological and historical reasons for why the world is as it is. Geography is on the news every day, from conflict in Syria, to the proposed High Speed rail-link between Birmingham and London, the pressure on resources from water to oil and the impacts of global climate change...the list is endless. These are the skills and habits which outstanding students of Geography develop. Do as many of these as possible to become completely independent in the subject and to develop the skills and knowledge needed to attain 8/9 at GCSE and A* at A Level.

Remember that just doing what your teacher tells you - in your lessons and beyond - is not enough to develop your full potential in the subject.

In your lessons

- Participate in lessons with specific questions and asking for help.
- Engage in debate over controversial topics.
- Listening to other students and the teacher, respecting the range of viewpoints on topics.
- Thinking critically about your own work and finding ways to improve it.
- Thinking about ways in which new knowledge you encounter in the lesson fits in with what you already know.

Between your lessons

- Looking back over your notes and activities from the last lesson.
- Reviewing the work of a lesson - making sure you know what you have or haven't understood.
- Use resources on Moodle to develop depth and breadth to your lesson notes and examination skills.
- Use past questions, sample student answers and examiner reports to develop quality answers.
- Use checklists to identify the context of learning particularly when applying case study knowledge to a question.
- Making notes of any questions to ask your teachers or look up on the Geography Sharepoint.
- Going to see your teacher to ask for clarification and guidance.

Beyond your lessons

- Keeping up to date with Geographical news and current affairs. Read a good **daily newspaper**/ news websites – so much news has a geographical element. Keep a close eye on relevant news stories to become an informed, global citizen.
- Read a geographical book. Have, and dip into, a good **atlas** at home. Download **Google Earth**, ideal for widening your geographical horizons. **Google Maps** is also useful and includes the excellent 'Street View' function
- Keep up to date using Geographical magazines and periodicals. **National Geographic, Geographical, Geography Review, Green Futures, The Economist** are all available in the Library.
- Watching high quality documentaries and **TED talks** to enrich your learning. There are so many, and even dedicated channels on Freeview such as the **Discovery Channel** and **National Geographic**. Look at **TED lectures** online for up-to-date presentations and debates on wide ranging issues.
- Talking to your friends and family about what you have learnt.
- Develop a sense of the 'big picture' by forming synoptic links between topics.
- Keeping a glossary of key geographical terms.

- Use days out and holidays to experience the wider world and apply lesson knowledge to help identify the Geography. Consider any holiday or visit an informal **geographical fieldtrip**. Read travel guides before and when you go – these will enable you to enjoy all aspects of your trip e.g. landscape and culture.
- Write an EPQ on a geographical theme that you are interested in exploring in greater detail – it is also an opportunity to investigate a geographical area not covered in class.
- Enter Geographical competitions - explore the **Geographical Association and Royal Geographical Society** websites and become a **Young Geographer** and get involved in the poster and essay competitions they run.
- Look into volunteering opportunities with issues based charities, such as the **National Trust**, or get involved in mentoring in Geography in school.
- Consider getting involved in a geographical research project with a trip organised by **Earthwatch**.

Of course we recognise that our students have busy lives and that this level of engagement is not always possible all the time - but this is what you should aim for if you want to reach the highest level in the subject. You don't need to do ALL of these things to improve your Geography - just doing one or two of them will have an impact. Decide on two or three to focus on to improve your skills.