

Why study Geography?

It's a fairly safe bet that most of us have, at some time or another, gazed at a stunning view of jagged mountains, or sea cliffs pounded by an angry sea, or got caught in a torrential downpour, or gazed in awe at downtown skyscrapers only to turn a corner to find a run-down zone of crumbling houses. But have you ever considered why such landscapes are like this? Geography has been defined as *"The study of the earth and its features and of the distribution of life on the earth, including human life and the effects of human activity,"* and it seeks to explain why, how, and where such features have formed. It's topical, and barely a day goes by without an aspect of the subject gaining media coverage, whether it is the impact of an extreme weather event or the varied consequences of global warming. If you're curious by nature, and most of us are, and have a desire to find out more about the world and what makes it tick then Geography is the subject for you, and a qualification that you'll almost certainly enjoy studying.

What is the character of assessment?

AQA A-level Assessment: Two 2.5hr exams worth 40% of the A level each with the remaining 20% assessed by completion of a Geographical Investigation.

Component 1- Physical Geography

- Section A: Water & Carbon cycles
- Section B: Coastal systems
- Section C: Hazards

Component 2- Human Geography

- Section A: Global systems & governance
- Section B: Changing places
- Section C: Contemporary Urban Environments

Component 3- Geographical Investigation

What types of things will I learn?

Component 1 Core: Water & Carbon Cycles

This unit focuses on the dynamic cyclical relationships of the major stores of water & carbon at or near the surface. These are the major elements of the natural environment & understanding them is fundamental to many aspects of physical geography.

Component 1 Option: Coastal systems

Coastal zones are dynamic and reflect the interaction of wind, wave, currents and marine and terrestrial sediments. Distinctive landscapes are produced by a range of interacting processes and this unit explores the beauty & diversity of this landscape & their importance to human habitation.

Component 1 Option: Hazards

The earth & the atmosphere intermittently, but regularly present hazards to human populations through dramatic & catastrophic fashion. By exploring the origin & character of the hazard you will begin to gain an appreciation of the wide range and variety of factors influencing their management. Volcanic, seismic, storm & fire hazards will all be investigated utilising examples drawn from contrasting locations.

Component 2 Core: Global systems & governance

This unit addresses the economic, social and political changes associated with technological advances and other driving forces of a global economy. You will engage with issues of international trade, access to markets and the governance of Global Commons- most notably the Antarctic Treaty.

Component 2 Core: Changing Places

With the Earth's population not projected to stabilise until we reach a population of approximately 11 billion it is vital that we have an appreciation of how the character of place can change over time and space. You will carry out an in depth study of two contrasting locations in the UK by applying a range of investigative skills to determine the true nature of 'place' & how they adapt and change in a dynamic world.

Component 2 Option: Contemporary urban environments

This unit focuses specifically on urban growth & change which are seemingly ubiquitous processes that present both challenge and opportunity for human populations. You will engage with a range of urban settings from contrasting areas of the World to appreciate human diversity & develop insight into questions of equity and sustainability.

Component 3: Geographical Investigation

You complete a 3,000-4,000 word investigation about an aspect of the specification. Data collection, presentation, analysis and evaluation are all key elements to the process designed to develop and assess a range of Geographical skills.

What are the lessons like?

You will have the full 'Geography experience' which extends way beyond the classroom. The course starts with a 5 day residential to the NE within which a range of elements of the A level are addressed. Case study investigations, practical class-based work, fieldwork, presentations, and research investigations are just some of the tools we utilise within the department to develop your knowledge and understanding. Skills of data collection, presentation and analysis developed whilst on fieldwork are of paramount importance in developing skills of enquiry necessary for success in Component 3- the Geographical Investigation.

At all stages of study you will be working closely with subject teachers who operate an open door policy throughout the A-level.

What can it lead to?

Geographers are found in all walks of life from exploring and teaching to volcanology and planning. The unique range of skills and knowledge of the world are valued by many employers and in our environmentally conscious age there are increasing opportunities in "green" careers such as environmental research and monitoring.

Want to know more?

To find out more about the course and discuss your suitability please contact Miss Peck M.Peck@qes.org.uk or Mr Douglas A.Douglas@qes.org.uk

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