



Bridging the GCSE to A Level Geography Gap

Hoping to study Geography at A level? Congratulations on picking a very important subject; Geography plays a crucial role in understanding our world. It makes a vital contribution to our knowledge of the rapidly changing environmental and social challenges facing us and how we should tackle them. It also is a subject that is multi-disciplined in its skills and bridges both the sciences and humanities. It also is a preferred subject by the Russell group universities. This document aims at supporting the transition from GCSE to a successful A level student.

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. **Know your A Level Course**- Starting to explore the topics and their foundations in which they will be studied in the A Level Course. Knowing what you will study helps focus your wider reading/watching/listening.
4. **Complete your pre course tasks** - At the bottom of this document are 10 tasks that would help you get a HUGE head start in your course, both in developing key knowledge and skills.

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 studying people and landscapes, it is also the relationships that exist between people and their environment.

1. Develop as a Geographer

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

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.

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 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>
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.
- **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>
- **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/b011qmc1/episodes/guide>
- **Trumps War on the Border** <https://www.channel4.com/programmes/trumps-war-on-the-border>
- **Dispatches** <https://www.channel4.com/programmes/dispatches/on-demand/67256-001>
- **Earth from Space – episode 4 The Changing Planet (BBC iPlayer)** <https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/p072n8m0/earth-from-space-series-1-4-changing-planet>

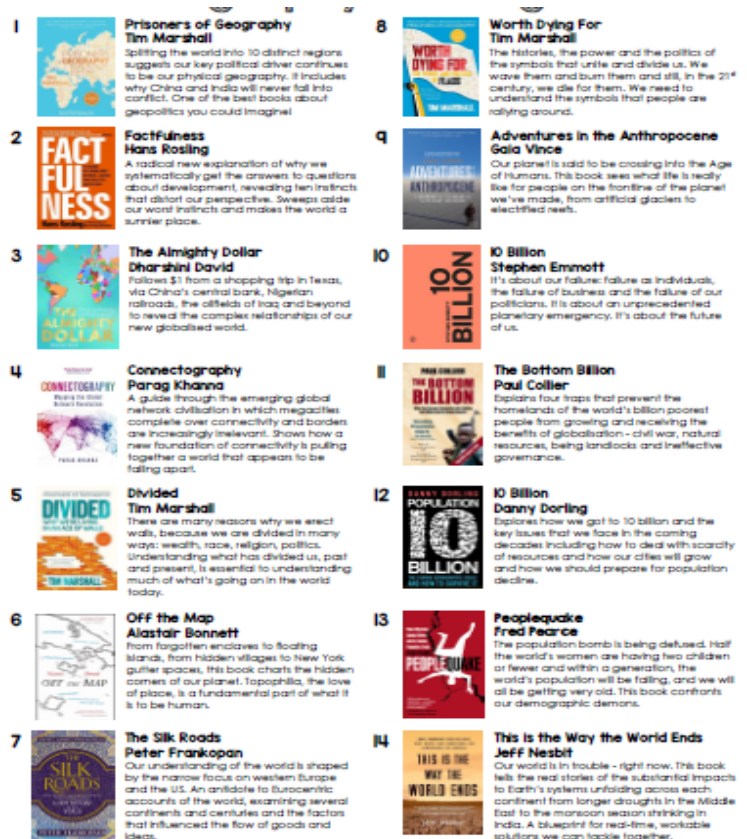
Geography on NETFLIX, DVD or YOUTUBE:

- **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
- **An Inconvenient Truth** – follows Al Gore on the lecture circuit as he seeks to raise awareness about Climate Change.
- **+ An Inconvenient Sequel**
- **A case for optimism - Al Gore** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u7E1v24DlIk>

Geography BOOKS!

If you are into reading both fiction and non fictions, 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.
- **Six Degrees** by Mark Lynas – a scary walkthrough of the impacts of Climate Change as world temperatures increase by 1 degree through to 6 degrees.
- **Divided** by Tim Marshall – his follow-up to Prisoners of Geography – a great book which explains how & why the world is becoming more divided and how countries are putting up barriers. Very relevant to events in Europe (Brexit), the US (Trump) and the Coronavirus situation.



2. Become a news buff!

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.

- **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 you're 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 short but insightful articles.

What should I do with resources I am reading and watching?

This is a skills we will help you develop (such as using Cornell notes) but essentially the same format works for most of these when making notes:

- What are the key things that the article is telling you about- can you summarise in to 10 main points
- What part of Geography/what we study does this link to?
- Are there any keywords that you need to look into more or you feel would be useful for your studies.

3. Know your A Level course - What does Geography look like at Richard Hale?

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
Water and Carbon (36 marks)	Global Governance (36 marks)	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.
Coastal Environments (36 marks)	Changing Places (36 marks)	
Hazards (48 marks)	Contemporary Urban Environments (48 marks)	You will be taken out on a residential fieldwork trip work to gather data for this. We normally go to Devon for 5 days.

Unit Titles and suggested reading lists:

As part of most A Level courses, just like a degree, we expect more independent learning and much of this comes from wider reading. The best students are the ones who take the time to do this and really know their subject.

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 shoreline 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](#)**
- Really interesting Antarctica Websites: <https://www.coolantarctica.com/index.php> AND <https://discoveringantarctica.org.uk/>
- Tracking the Coronavirus Pandemic: <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/> and <https://ourworldindata.org/> and <https://www.who.int/>
- Governing Climate Change – World Agreements: <https://www.ipcc.ch/> and <https://unfccc.int/>

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](#)**
- **Interesting article by [Doreen Massey](#)**- A human geography looking at The Sense of Place
- **[Changing Spaces – Making Places](#)** = A good powerpoint going through some of the content of the topic.

Contemporary Urban Environments

- The Andrew Marr *Megacities* documentaries (2011) have some excellent material on the issues facing cities including London, Shanghai, Dhaka and Mexico City
[Episode 1: Living in the city](#)
[Episode 2: Cities on the Edge](#)
[Episode 3: Sustaining the City](#)
- [Watch BBC documentary *Supersized Earth: A place to live*](#)
- The RGS online lecture on gentrification can be found at <http://www.rgs.org/WhatsOn/London+Lectures/Online+Lectures.htm>

4. Complete the pre-course tasks from the grid below using the above reading links, plus any of your own to help you.

<p>Create a personal geography map of your own area- include photographs, personal reflections and places of importance (Changing Places)</p>	<p>Watch one documentary on Climate Change- Create 20 questions that people could answer if they were to watch the documentary. (Water and Carbon Cycles)</p>	<p>Watch one of the Andrew Marr 'MegaCities' documentaries and with that please produce an account of the challenges and possible solutions facing contemporary urban environments. (Contemporary Urban environments)</p>
<p>Effectively managing a world Pandemic needs effective global governance. Discuss this view point. (Global systems and Global Governance)</p>	<p>In 300 words, explain what 'geography' means to you</p>	<p>Produce a mind map or poster of the multi- hazard area of Haiti (Hazards)</p>
<p>Read up on news articles related to urban inequality in an area of London. Write a letter to the prime minister explaining the impact of this on the chosen urban area. (Contemporary urban environments))</p>	<p>Read the Geofile 'Coastal Systems, waves, sediments and cells) and summarise on 1 side of A4 paper. (Coasts)</p>	<p>Listen to a geography Podcast of your choice. Summarise your findings as bullet points on 2-3 slides as a presentation, with your own OPINION on the matter..</p>
<p>Summer Binge on a Geography Book or video series of your choice. Use the links above as a starter point. Try and ensure there are some links to the course though!</p>		

We hope you have found this useful as a (very good) start to your A Level course. The advantage you will have by beginning these good habits now and completing pre course work will be huge. At A Level the more you put in, the more you will get out; and certainly a better grade!

If you need any further help or questioned answered please do contact the school, or myself directly via email tsk@richardhale.co.uk

Best wishes,

Mr T Skipper

Head of Geography

Richard Hale School