



Geography Curriculum

"More than ever we need the geographer's skills and foresight to help us learn about our planet - how we use it and how we abuse it" - Michael Palin

Overview

We all live our lives geographically. Planet Earth is our home. It is awesome, diverse, inspiring and ever changing. The Geography team at St Wilfrid's seek to familiarise students with this world we call home, encouraging them to think critically about our actions on both local and international scales. We do this through studying a range of relevant and up to date topics, making frequent cross curricular links and challenging students to make links between what we study in lessons and what happens in their own lives.

Key Stage 3

Geography is taught in Years 7, 8 and 9. Subject content is varied with a mix of physical and human Geography topics. Year 7 is started with a baseline assessment, giving the department an idea of each student's prior knowledge in the subject on entering key stage 3. The year group then go on to be introduced to the subject throughout the first half term, building skills such as map reading and co-ordinates. Having built up some basic geographical skills, we then move on to look at our local area, Crawley, focussing on its history, the changes that have occurred and what may happen to the area in future. Following this study, Year 7's will continue to broaden and extend their horizons throughout the remaining terms, looking at the British Isles, the continent of Africa and finally studying the mainly physical topic of coasts, erosion and protecting the coastline from retreat.

Year 8, begins with a topic based on biodiversity, ecosystems and protecting wildlife. We study the stresses and strains being placed on our natural world by humanity and ways that we can reduce this pressure. At this point students will gain evaluative skills, understanding why conflicts occur between different interest groups and evaluating what the best options would be for future development, socially, economically and environmentally. We also continue this theme about how humans are exploiting earth in the topics of "energy", "climate change" and "Antarctica", suggesting sustainable ways to protect the environment.

Year 9 is full of topics that can be very easily related to what is seen on the everyday news. The year is started with tourism and how human actions can both benefit and damage an area. We focus on Spain and Mallorca since these are places that many students will have visited, making it more relevant for them. Following this comes the topic of "restless earth". This topic combines both physical and human geography. Students explore why tectonic processes and hazards occur, the impacts that these hazards can have on people, the economy and the environment and student will leave this topic with a sound understanding that hazards cannot be prevented, but that places can be prepared for them, reducing their impacts. Particularly interesting case studies such as Haiti versus California and the 2004 Boxing day tsunami vs the 2011 tsunami challenge students to explore how economic development may allow certain locations to be less affected by the hazards they encounter than other less developed nations. This leads into the topic of development and globalisation, looking at the spread of global brands and their impact on people in rich and poor nations. The year is rounded off testing the skills that the students have gained. Students are given a very loose rein and allowed to work independently in a decision making activity based on the European Union. Students must decide whether it is best for Britain to be part of or to leave the European Union.



Key Stage 4

GCSE Geography is an optional subject in Years 10 and 11. We follow the Edexcel 'B' Geography specification. This has four units that cover a range of physical and human topics, building high level skills such as analytical and evaluative technique:

- Unit 1 : Dynamic Planet (1hr exam)
- Unit 2 : People and the Planet (1hr exam)
- Unit 3 : Decision Making Exercise (1.5hr exam)
- Unit 4 : Coastal erosion, conflicts and management (Controlled Assessment task)

Key Stage 5

Geography is also offered at AS and A2 level. We follow the Edexcel 'GCE in Geography' specification. The units covered offer students the opportunity to deepen their knowledge of some topics whilst also offering new areas of inquiry. The full A-level course has four units in total. Alternatively, students can choose to follow the course for just one year and gain an AS qualification made up of two units.

AS

Unit 1 : Global Challenges

This topic is made of two main parts. The first is based on hazards ranging from tectonic hazards such as earthquakes and volcanoes, through to meteorological hazards, with a strong focus also on climate change, global warming and the impacts that this may have. The second part of unit 1 is on the human topic of globalisation. This allows students to examine how the world is becoming increasingly interconnected, how technology is changing people's lives and how we can expect things to change even more in the future. This is worth 60% of the AS level.

Unit 2 :

This unit is based on geographical skills and fieldwork. Students take 3 fieldtrips over the course of the year, allowing them to build a range of geographical skills. Trips are taken to Brighton and Ditchling/Wivelsfield to study urban and rural rebranding and to assess the need for additional re-imaging work. Later in the year students also have the opportunity to travel to Dorset for a 3 day residential trip. Here they look at the impacts of coastal erosion and development along the coastline. This fieldwork is analysed in lessons and students must be prepared to write analytically and in an evaluative fashion about their fieldwork experiences in an exam.

A2

Unit 3 : Contested Planet

This again is worth 60% of the A2 exam marks. Student study a wide range of topics that encompass both a physical and human dimension in each. These topics include energy security, water conflicts, bio-diversity under threat, superpower geographies, the development gap and finally the technological fix, which relates to the previous 5 topics. For this exam, students will receive pre-release material to study before the exam. They must pick an additional 2 topics to answer questions on in the exam.

Unit 4 :

This unit is aimed at allowing students to work independently choosing one of six optional topics to study in great depth and to be examined on in an essay style exam. The topics open to students include tectonic activity and hazards, cold environments and their change, the food supply problem, world of cultural diversity, pollution and human health risk and finally leisure and tourism in rural areas. Students choose their topic at Christmas time and spend the rest of the year conducting guided research. In this unit, the teacher will step back from the role of teacher to one of mentor, guiding the students. This exam is an excellent way of preparing students for university style work and really allows students to get their teeth into a topic that they enjoy. The exam lasts 1.5hrs and is composed of 1 question for the topic chosen worth 70 marks.



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