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Geography Curriculum Intent

GCSE – Year 10

The GCSE Geography curriculum inspires students to become inquisitive, analytical and responsible global citizens by developing a deep understanding of the physical and human processes that shape our world. Following the Eduqas GCSE Geography A specification, students investigate a wide range of contemporary geographical issues through the study of distinctive landscapes, urban and rural change, tectonic hazards, weather and climate, ecosystems, global development and resource management. They explore how physical and human environments are interconnected, considering how decisions made today influence the sustainability of people, places and environments in the future.

Throughout the course, students develop as practising geographers by interpreting maps, graphs, photographs, satellite imagery and geographical data, whilst applying geographical concepts including place, process, scale, change, interconnectedness and sustainability. They undertake geographical enquiries, evaluate evidence from a range of sources and construct balanced, evidence-based judgements about real-world issues affecting communities at local, national and global scales.

Fieldwork forms an integral part of the curriculum, with students carrying out geographical investigations in Greenwich and contrasting locations within London, applying classroom learning to authentic environments through the collection, presentation, analysis and evaluation of primary and secondary data. This enquiry-based approach develops the disciplinary skills required for Component 3 and encourages students to think critically about how geographical evidence informs planning, decision making and environmental management.

By the end of the course, students will have developed the knowledge, skills and confidence to understand an increasingly complex and interconnected world. They leave GCSE Geography equipped to interpret contemporary issues, evaluate competing viewpoints and make informed decisions about the environmental, social and economic challenges facing both the United Kingdom and the wider world.

Terms 1 and 2
Paper 1

Theme 1: Distinctive Landscapes

Big Picture
What are the main ideas and big questions in this topic?

Theme 1 introduces students to the physical processes that shape some of the United Kingdom's most distinctive river and coastal landscapes. Through the study of rivers and coasts, students develop an understanding of how water continually changes the Earth's surface through erosion, transportation, weathering and deposition, creating landscapes that are dynamic rather than static.

Building upon the physical geography studied throughout Key Stage 3, this enquiry develops a more sophisticated understanding of drainage basins as open systems, the hydrological cycle, and the interaction between physical processes and landscape evolution. Students investigate how rivers and coastlines respond to changing environmental conditions, recognising that landscapes are constantly evolving over time.

Alongside physical processes, the enquiry explores the relationship between people and these environments. Students examine how flooding and coastal erosion create challenges for communities, whilst evaluating how hard and soft engineering strategies seek to reduce risk and manage landscapes sustainably. Through UK case studies, students appreciate that managing distinctive landscapes often requires balancing environmental, economic and social priorities.

This enquiry directly delivers the content of Eduqas GCSE Geography Theme 1: Distinctive Landscapes, providing students with the substantive knowledge and disciplinary skills required to interpret geographical evidence, analyse unfamiliar resources and construct well-supported geographical judgements.

Zoom In
What knowledge, skills and key vocabulary will we learn step by step?

The enquiry begins by exploring the drainage basin as an open system. Students investigate the movement of water through the hydrological cycle, examining stores, flows and the factors that influence river discharge. This provides the scientific foundation needed to understand how rivers function and why they respond differently to changing weather and environmental conditions.

Attention then turns to the work of rivers. Students investigate the processes of erosion, transportation and deposition, exploring how these processes create distinctive river landforms including V-shaped valleys, interlocking spurs, waterfalls, gorges, meanders, oxbow lakes, levees and floodplains. Students develop an understanding of landscape evolution by recognising how rivers continually reshape the land from source to mouth.

Building upon this understanding, students investigate the causes of flooding and examine how both physical and human factors influence flood risk. Through UK flood case studies, they analyse the impacts of flooding on people, the economy and the environment before evaluating a range of hard and soft engineering approaches used to manage rivers sustainably.

The enquiry then shifts to the UK's coastline, where students investigate how marine processes, weathering, mass movement, erosion, transportation and deposition shape distinctive coastal landscapes. They examine the formation of landforms including cliffs, wave-cut platforms, caves, arches, stacks, stumps, beaches, spits and bars, recognising how constructive and destructive waves continually modify coastlines.

The final part of the enquiry focuses on coastal management. Students evaluate a range of engineering strategies used to reduce erosion and flooding whilst considering the wider environmental, economic and social consequences of intervention. Throughout the enquiry, students recognise that river and coastal landscapes are interconnected systems requiring careful management to balance the needs of people and the environment.

The enquiry is structured around a sequence of focused questions including:

- How does a drainage basin work as a system?
- How do rivers create distinctive landscapes?
- Why do rivers flood?
- How can rivers be managed sustainably?

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- How do coastal processes shape the coastline?
- How are coastal landforms formed?
- How can coastlines be managed sustainably?
- How do physical processes create distinctive landscapes?

Throughout the enquiry, students strengthen their disciplinary understanding by interpreting OS maps, hydrographs, cross-sections, GIS, aerial photographs, geological maps, satellite imagery and fieldwork evidence. They explain physical processes, identify spatial patterns, analyse geographical evidence and evaluate management strategies using increasingly sophisticated geographical terminology.

Key vocabulary including drainage basin, watershed, interception, infiltration, throughflow, groundwater flow, hydraulic action, abrasion, attrition, solution, traction, saltation, suspension, deposition, discharge, hydrograph, weathering, mass movement, constructive waves, destructive waves, longshore drift, wave refraction, groynes, sea walls, managed retreat and sustainability is explicitly taught, revisited and applied throughout the enquiry.

Pre-Requisite Knowledge
What have we already learned that will help us with this topic?

This enquiry builds directly upon students' Key Stage 3 understanding of rivers, coasts, glaciation, weathering, erosion, deposition and environmental management. Earlier studies of the River Medway, flooding, coastal landforms, mountains and climate provide a secure foundation for developing the more detailed physical geography required at GCSE.

Students also draw upon disciplinary skills developed throughout Key Stage 3, including interpreting maps, satellite imagery, GIS, graphs and geographical data, enabling them to investigate increasingly complex physical systems and geographical relationships.

Pitch Up
How will we challenge ourselves?

Landscapes are constantly changing. Every river valley, cliff, beach and waterfall tells the story of thousands of years of physical processes shaping the Earth's surface. This enquiry invites students to investigate these changing environments whilst considering why they matter to the people who live, work and visit them.

Students analyse maps, hydrographs, satellite imagery, fieldwork evidence and contemporary case studies to understand how rivers and coastlines evolve over time. They investigate real examples of flooding and coastal erosion before evaluating the difficult decisions faced by communities seeking to balance environmental protection, economic development and public safety.

By the end of the enquiry, students appreciate that distinctive landscapes are not simply places to admire but dynamic environments that require careful management in an increasingly changing climate.

Wider Framework
How does this learning connect to future topics and bigger goals?

Theme 1 establishes many of the core physical geography concepts that underpin the remainder of the GCSE course. Understanding systems, processes and landscape evolution prepares students for later studies of tectonic hazards, weather and climate, ecosystems and resource management.

Curriculum Hinterland
What wider knowledge will deepen our understanding of this topic?

Britain's rivers and coastlines have shaped settlement, transport, industry and tourism for centuries. They continue to influence how communities develop whilst presenting significant environmental opportunities and challenges.

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The enquiry also develops the analytical and evaluative skills required throughout GCSE Geography, encouraging students to interpret unfamiliar resources, apply geographical knowledge to new contexts and construct balanced, evidence-based extended responses.	This enquiry encourages students to look beyond individual landforms and recognise that landscapes are continually changing systems influenced by both natural processes and human decisions. Understanding how these environments function enables students to appreciate why sustainable management is becoming increasingly important in the face of climate change, rising sea levels and growing flood risk.

Authentic connections

How does this topic connect to real life, careers, other subjects and important values?

This enquiry demonstrates how physical geography influences the lives of millions of people. Students investigate how rivers and coastlines provide water, transport routes, habitats and economic opportunities whilst also presenting challenges through flooding, coastal erosion and environmental change.

SMSC is embedded throughout the enquiry. Socially, students explore how communities respond to flooding and coastal change, considering the impacts on homes, livelihoods and infrastructure. Morally, they evaluate difficult decisions surrounding flood protection, coastal defence and sustainable environmental management. Spiritually, students develop a sense of awe through studying the power of natural processes to shape landscapes over thousands of years. Culturally, they investigate the importance of rivers and coastlines to Britain's heritage, economy and identity.

The enquiry promotes British Values through respectful discussion, evidence-based decision making and consideration of how governments, communities and environmental organisations work together to manage landscapes sustainably.

Cross-curricular links are made with science through the water cycle, weathering, climate and environmental processes; Mathematics through hydrograph interpretation and data analysis; history through the influence of rivers and coasts on settlement, trade and industry; and Computing through GIS and digital mapping.

Students explore careers including hydrologist, coastal engineer, environmental consultant, flood risk manager, civil engineer, geologist, GIS analyst, conservation officer, planner and geographer.
The enquiry supports employability through the Skills Builder Universal Framework, particularly:

- Problem Solving through evaluating river and coastal management strategies using geographical evidence.
- Planning through investigating how physical environments can be managed sustainably to reduce future risk.
- Speaking through presenting balanced geographical judgements supported by maps, data and case study evidence.

Resources

What books, websites, videos and materials will support our learning?

Assessment

How will we show what we know, remember and can apply?

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Eduqas GCSE Geography resources, WJEC digital resources, Ordnance Survey maps, GIS software, geological maps, topographical maps, contour maps, aerial photography, satellite imagery, field sketches, photographs, river long profiles and cross-sections, coastal landform diagrams, British Geological Survey resources, Environment Agency flood data, documentaries, news articles and located UK case studies.	Students complete an end-of-theme assessment exploring the enquiry question: How do physical processes create distinctive landscapes? Assessment activities throughout the topic require students to interpret hydrographs, OS maps, cross-sections, GIS outputs, photographs and coastal profiles before constructing extended geographical explanations and evaluations using case study evidence. Assessment is explicitly aligned to the Eduqas GCSE Geography Component 1 examination, developing students' confidence with resource interpretation, structured data-response questions and extended evaluative writing.

Terms 3 and 4
Paper 1

Theme 2: Rural-Urban Links

Big Picture
What are the main ideas and big questions in this topic?

Theme 2 explores the changing relationship between rural and urban environments, examining how settlements are connected through people, transport, employment, services and economic activity. Students investigate why settlements grow and change over time, how urbanisation has transformed the United Kingdom and the wider world, and how rural and urban areas remain dependent upon one another.

Building upon students' understanding of population, migration, development and global cities developed throughout Key Stage 3, the enquiry introduces increasingly sophisticated ideas surrounding settlement hierarchy, urban functions, accessibility and regional inequality. Students examine how physical and human factors influence the location, growth and function of settlements before considering how changes in population, employment and transport continue to reshape both urban and rural communities.

The enquiry also investigates the challenges facing settlements in the twenty-first century, including urban deprivation, rural decline, housing pressures, transport, regeneration and sustainable development. Through detailed UK case studies, students evaluate how geographical planning seeks to improve quality of life whilst balancing economic growth, environmental protection and the needs of local communities.

This enquiry directly delivers the content of Eduqas GCSE Geography Theme 2: Rural–Urban Links, preparing students to interpret settlement data, analyse geographical evidence and evaluate strategies designed to create more sustainable places.

Zoom In
What knowledge, skills and key vocabulary will we learn step by step?

The enquiry begins by exploring the characteristics of rural and urban settlements, introducing the concepts of site, situation, settlement hierarchy and function. Students investigate why settlements develop in particular locations and how physical geography, transport links and economic opportunities influence patterns of

growth. Attention then turns to the changing relationship between rural and urban areas. Students examine migration, commuting and accessibility, recognising that settlements are increasingly connected through transport, employment and services rather than existing as isolated places.

Building upon this understanding, students investigate the causes and consequences of urbanisation. Through UK examples, they examine housing shortages, inequalities, congestion, pollution and changing land use before considering how urban regeneration can improve quality of life. The enquiry then shifts towards rural change. Students investigate the challenges facing rural communities, including ageing populations, declining services, affordable housing and changing employment patterns, whilst recognising the opportunities created through diversification, tourism and improved connectivity.

The final part of the enquiry focuses on sustainable settlement planning. Students evaluate how transport, regeneration, green spaces and environmental management contribute to creating places that are economically successful, socially inclusive and environmentally sustainable.

The enquiry is structured around a sequence of focused questions including:

- Why do settlements develop where they do?
- How are rural and urban places connected?
- How has urbanisation changed the UK?
- What challenges do cities face?
- How are rural communities changing?
- How can settlements become more sustainable?
- How should we plan the places of the future?

Throughout the enquiry, students strengthen their disciplinary understanding by interpreting OS maps, land-use maps, GIS datasets, census data, demographic statistics, urban models and photographic evidence. They identify spatial patterns, explain geographical processes and evaluate planning decisions using a wide range of evidence.

Key vocabulary including urbanisation, counter-urbanisation, suburbanisation, commuter, accessibility, settlement hierarchy, sphere of influence, regeneration, brownfield, greenfield, deprivation, sustainability and diversification is explicitly taught, revisited and applied throughout the enquiry.

Pre-Requisite Knowledge *What have we already learned that will help us with this topic?*	**Pitch Up** *How will we challenge ourselves?*
This enquiry builds directly upon students' Key Stage 3 understanding of population, migration, development, global cities and sustainability. Earlier studies introduced how settlements grow and change; Theme 2 develops these ideas further by exploring settlement systems, urban processes and planning in greater depth.	Where we live influences almost every aspect of our daily lives. From access to schools, healthcare and employment to transport, housing and green spaces, geography plays a central role in shaping communities. This enquiry encourages students to investigate the places around them whilst exploring how settlements across the UK continue to evolve. Through maps, census data, GIS and real-world case studies, students examine why some

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Students also continue developing disciplinary knowledge through the interpretation of maps, GIS, census data and demographic information, preparing them for increasingly complex geographical investigations throughout the GCSE course.	communities grow whilst others decline and consider how planners seek to create places that are healthier, more connected and more sustainable. By the end of the enquiry, students recognise that settlements are living systems, continually changing in response to population, economic activity and the decisions people make about the future.
Wider Framework *How does this learning connect to future topics and bigger goals?*	**Curriculum Hinterland** *What wider knowledge will deepen our understanding of this topic?*
Theme 2 strengthens students' understanding of human geography by demonstrating how settlements are shaped by economic, social and environmental processes. The concepts introduced throughout this enquiry provide an important foundation for later studies of development, resource management and social development issues, where changing populations and settlement patterns continue to influence quality of life. The enquiry also reinforces the importance of geographical decision making, encouraging students to evaluate how planning can create more resilient and sustainable communities.	Settlements are far more than collections of buildings; they reflect centuries of geographical change, economic development and human decision making. This enquiry encourages students to recognise that every town and city has developed for particular geographical reasons and continues to evolve in response to changing needs. Students also develop an appreciation of the interdependence between rural and urban environments, recognising that both rely upon one another for resources, employment, services and economic prosperity. Geography provides the tools to understand these relationships and to consider how settlements can adapt to future challenges.
Authentic connections *How does this topic connect to real life, careers, other subjects and important values?*	

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This enquiry explores the geographical issues that influence where people live, work and access services. Students investigate housing, transport, regeneration and environmental quality whilst recognising how planning decisions affect communities across the UK.

SMSC is embedded throughout the enquiry. Socially, students investigate inequalities within settlements and consider how regeneration can improve quality of life. Morally, they evaluate planning decisions that balance economic growth with environmental protection and community wellbeing. Spiritually, students reflect on the importance of place and belonging within local communities. Culturally, they explore how settlements develop distinctive identities through history, migration and changing populations.

The enquiry promotes British Values through discussions surrounding democratic planning, community consultation, individual responsibility and respect for diverse communities. Cross-curricular links are made with History through urbanisation and industrialisation, Mathematics through census interpretation and statistical analysis, Business through employment and economic activity, Computing through GIS and digital mapping, and Citizenship through community planning and local decision making.

Students explore careers including town planner, transport planner, surveyor, architect, housing officer, civil engineer, GIS analyst, environmental consultant, regeneration officer and geographer. The enquiry supports employability through the Skills Builder Universal Framework, particularly:

- Planning through evaluating how settlements can be developed sustainably to meet future needs.
- Problem Solving through analysing urban and rural challenges and proposing balanced geographical solutions.
- Listening through considering the perspectives of different stakeholders when evaluating planning and regeneration proposals.

Resources *What books, websites, videos and materials will support our learning?*	**Assessment** *How will we show what we know, remember and can apply?*
Eduqas GCSE Geography resources, WJEC digital resources, Ordnance Survey maps, GIS software, census data, Office for National Statistics datasets, aerial photography, satellite imagery, land-use maps, urban models, population pyramids, transport maps, planning documents, local authority resources, documentaries, news articles and located UK and global case studies.	Students complete an end-of-theme assessment exploring the enquiry question: How are rural and urban places connected? Assessment activities throughout the topic require students to interpret settlement maps, census data, GIS outputs, photographs and statistical evidence before constructing extended geographical explanations and evaluations using UK case studies. Assessment is explicitly aligned to the Eduqas GCSE Geography Component 1 examination, developing students' confidence with resource interpretation, structured data-response questions and extended evaluative writing.

Terms 5 and 6 **Paper 1**	**Theme 3: Tectonic Landscapes and Hazards (Year 10)**

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Big Picture

What are the main ideas and big questions in this topic?

Theme 3 develops students' understanding of the Earth as a dynamic system. Students investigate how tectonic processes operate at different scales, creating dramatic landforms such as rift valleys, ocean trenches, shield volcanoes, stratovolcanoes and calderas. The enquiry builds directly upon students' Key Stage 3 study of tectonics, Vesuvius and natural hazards, but now requires a more detailed GCSE understanding of process, scale, risk and vulnerability.

The theme is deliberately rooted in the relationship between physical processes and human consequences. Students examine why earthquakes, volcanic eruptions and tsunamis create different levels of impact in different places, considering how magnitude, hazard type, levels of development, governance, preparedness and emergency planning influence vulnerability.

Alongside the physical geography, students evaluate how the risks associated with tectonic hazards can be reduced. Monitoring, hazard mapping, building technology and emergency planning are examined as strategies that help people live more safely in tectonically active regions. This directly reflects the Eduqas focus on geographical futures, interconnectedness, mitigating risk, process and change, scale and sustainability.

Zoom In

What knowledge, skills and key vocabulary will we learn step by step?

The enquiry begins with the global distribution of tectonic activity and its relationship to plate movement and plate boundaries. Students revisit convection currents before developing more secure understanding of subduction, divergence and activity at constructive and destructive margins.

Attention then turns to tectonic landforms. Students examine how large-scale processes create rift valleys and ocean trenches, before studying volcanic hotspots and distinctive volcanic landscapes. They learn the differences between shield volcanoes, stratovolcanoes and calderas, alongside smaller-scale volcanic features including cinder cones, lava tubes and geysers.

The second half of the enquiry focuses on vulnerability and risk. Students investigate the impacts of earthquakes, tsunamis and volcanic eruptions on health, infrastructure and economies. They explore the physical characteristics of hazards, including pyroclastic flows, lava flows, lahars and ash clouds, before considering why social and economic factors increase vulnerability in countries at different levels of development. The specification requires students to study one located volcanic hazard and one located earthquake event.

The enquiry is structured around focused questions including:

- Where are tectonic hazards found?
- How do tectonic processes create landforms?
- How do volcanoes create distinctive landscapes?
- What are the impacts of earthquakes, tsunamis and volcanic eruptions?
- Why are some communities more vulnerable to tectonic hazards than others?
- How can the risks from tectonic hazards be reduced?

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- How do tectonic processes create hazards and shape landscapes?

Key vocabulary includes convection, subduction, divergence, constructive margin, destructive margin, rift valley, ocean trench, hotspot, shield volcano, stratovolcano, caldera, cinder cone, lava tube, geyser, pyroclastic flow, lahar, vulnerability, hazard mapping, monitoring and emergency planning.

Pre-Requisite Knowledge
What have we already learned that will help us with this topic?

Students build upon KS3 knowledge of the structure of the Earth, plate boundaries, volcanoes, earthquakes and volcanic hazards. Their Year 7 study of Vesuvius introduced the relationship between tectonic processes, settlement and risk; Theme 3 now develops this into a more detailed GCSE study of global hazard patterns, vulnerability and management.

Students also draw upon wider GCSE skills developed in Themes 1 and 2, including interpreting maps, diagrams, photographs, data and unfamiliar resources.

Pitch Up
How will we challenge ourselves?

Students approach this theme as hazard geographers. They interpret tectonic maps, satellite imagery, eruption evidence, earthquake data and impact statistics to explain why hazards occur and why their consequences vary.

Through located examples, students compare vulnerability, preparedness and response, recognising that natural hazards only become disasters when they affect people. They evaluate whether better planning, monitoring and building design can reduce risk, and consider the difficult decisions faced by communities living in tectonically active places.

Wider Framework
How does this learning connect to future topics and bigger goals?

Theme 3 strengthens students' understanding of risk, vulnerability and resilience, concepts which recur throughout GCSE Geography in climate hazards, flooding, development and fieldwork decision-making. It also develops the ability to explain physical processes whilst evaluating how human factors influence the severity of hazard impacts.

Curriculum Hinterland
What wider knowledge will deepen our understanding of this topic?

Tectonic hazards remind students that the Earth is powerful, unpredictable and constantly changing. This theme helps students understand that disasters are never purely natural; their impacts are shaped by poyerty, planning, governance, education, technology and infrastructure.

Students leave the enquiry with a stronger appreciation of why people continue to live in hazardous places and how geography helps societies reduce risk rather than simply react after disasters occur.

Authentic connections
How does this topic connect to real life, careers, other subjects and important values?

This theme links directly to real-world hazard planning, emergency response and international aid. SMSC is developed through considering the human impact of disasters, the moral responsibility of governments to protect citizens, and the resilience of communities rebuilding after earthquakes, tsunamis and eruptions.

British Values are promoted through evidence-based debate, respect for different experiences of disaster and discussion of how governments and organisations should respond fairly and effectively. Citizenship links include disaster preparedness, international cooperation, aid, risk reduction and community responsibility. PSHE/RSHE links include resilience, safety, decision making and responding to crisis.

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Careers include volcanologist, seismologist, hazard planner, emergency response officer, civil engineer, GIS analyst, humanitarian aid worker, geologist and environmental consultant.

The enquiry supports the Skills Builder Universal Framework, particularly:

- Problem Solving through evaluating risk-reduction strategies
- Planning through considering emergency preparation and hazard management
- Speaking through presenting evidence-based judgements about tectonic risk.

Resources *What books, websites, videos and materials will support our learning?*	**Assessment** *How will we show what we know, remember and can apply?*
Eduqas GCSE Geography resources, WJEC digital resources, Ordnance Survey maps, GIS software, tectonic plate maps, hazard distribution maps, geological cross-sections, satellite imagery, seismic and volcanic monitoring data, USGS resources, British Geological Survey resources, aerial photography, documentaries, news reports and located volcanic and earthquake case studies.	Students complete an end-of-theme assessment linked to Eduqas GCSE Geography Component 1. Assessment tasks require students to interpret tectonic maps, diagrams, photographs, hazard data and located case study evidence before constructing extended responses evaluating vulnerability and hazard management. Students demonstrate substantive knowledge through their understanding of tectonic processes, landforms, volcanic features, earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanic hazards, vulnerability and risk reduction. Disciplinary knowledge is assessed through interpreting unfamiliar resources, analysing patterns, explaining process and change, comparing located examples and evaluating strategies to reduce tectonic risk.