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Geography Curriculum Intent

GCSE – Year 11

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 2

Theme 5: Weather, Climate and Ecosystems

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

Theme 5 develops students' understanding of the dynamic interactions between the atmosphere, climate and ecosystems that shape our planet. Students investigate the evidence for climate change throughout the Quaternary period, exploring the natural and human processes that influence Earth's climate and considering the impacts of these changes on people and environments. They examine the causes, characteristics and management of contrasting weather hazards before investigating how weather and climate vary across the UK and beyond.

Students then explore the structure and functioning of ecosystems at a range of scales, considering the complex relationships between living organisms and the physical environment. They investigate how ecosystems provide essential services for people, how human activities modify natural processes and how sustainable management strategies can protect biodiversity whilst meeting the needs of an increasing global population. Throughout the theme, students develop an appreciation of the interconnected nature of physical systems and evaluate how informed geographical decision making can contribute towards a more sustainable future.

Zoom In

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

The enquiry begins by investigating climate change during the Quaternary period. Students explore the cyclical pattern of glacial and interglacial periods before evaluating the evidence used to reconstruct past climates, including ice cores, carbon dioxide records, tree rings, historical accounts and temperature records. They develop an understanding of the carbon cycle and greenhouse effect before considering how natural processes, including volcanic activity, and human activity influence climate change.

Attention then turns to weather systems and climate. Students investigate global atmospheric circulation and how areas of high and low pressure influence global weather patterns. They undertake detailed studies of one low-pressure weather hazard and one high-pressure weather hazard, considering their causes, impacts and management. Students also explore the factors that influence weather and climate across the UK, including latitude, altitude, ocean currents, maritime and continental influences, and the creation of local microclimates.

The second half of the enquiry focuses on ecosystems and environmental management. Students investigate the global distribution of biomes before studying tropical rainforests and one contrasting biome. They examine nutrient, water and carbon cycles, food webs and ecosystem services, before considering how human activities alter natural processes, reduce biodiversity and increase environmental pressure. The enquiry concludes by evaluating sustainable management strategies that protect habitats whilst meeting the needs of a growing global population.

The enquiry is structured around focused questions including:

- How has Earth's climate changed during the Quaternary period?
- What evidence can be used to investigate climate change?
- What causes climate change?
- How do global atmospheric processes create weather hazards?
- Why does weather and climate vary across the UK?
- How do ecosystems function at different scales?
- How do human activities modify ecosystems?
- How can ecosystems be managed sustainably?

Key vocabulary includes Quaternary, glacial, interglacial, greenhouse effect, carbon cycle, atmospheric circulation, high pressure, low pressure, hurricane, drought, maritime, continental, microclimate, biome, biodiversity, ecosystem services, nutrient cycle, sustainability, conservation and climate change.

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Pre-Requisite Knowledge *What have we already learned that will help us with this topic?*	**Pitch Up** *How will we challenge ourselves?*
Students build upon their understanding of physical geography developed throughout Key Stage 3 and Themes 1–3 of the GCSE course. Prior learning about rivers, coasts, tectonic processes, weather, climate, ecosystems and geographical enquiry provides the foundation for studying the interactions between atmospheric processes, climate systems and ecosystems at a range of spatial and temporal scales. Students also apply geographical skills developed throughout the course, including data interpretation, map analysis and the evaluation of geographical evidence.	Students are challenged to make connections between atmospheric processes, climate systems and ecosystems, recognising that physical geography operates as an interconnected system rather than as isolated topics. They evaluate competing explanations for climate change, assess the effectiveness of different responses to weather hazards and justify sustainable management strategies using a range of geographical evidence. The most able students synthesise evidence from multiple sources, confidently apply geographical concepts such as process, scale, interconnectedness, cycles and flows, and geographical futures, and construct balanced evaluative arguments that consider environmental, economic and social perspectives.
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?*
This theme develops students' understanding of Earth's interconnected physical systems whilst strengthening the analytical and evaluative skills required for GCSE Geography and further geographical study. It provides essential preparation for geographical investigations and fieldwork by developing students' ability to interpret environmental data, evaluate evidence and understand the complex relationships between people and the natural environment. The knowledge developed supports future study in Geography, Environmental Science, Earth Sciences and sustainability-related careers.	Students explore how scientific understanding of climate and ecosystems has developed over time, from early weather observations to modern climate modelling and satellite technology. They investigate the work of pioneers such as Luke Howard, whose cloud classification system remains in use today, alongside the contributions of modern organisations including the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the Met Office, whose research informs global climate policy and hazard forecasting. Students also investigate the extraordinary biodiversity of tropical rainforests and contrasting biomes, recognising the vital role ecosystems play in regulating climate, storing carbon and supporting human life. They consider contemporary debates surrounding climate change, conservation, renewable energy and sustainable resource management, encouraging them to think critically about humanity's role within Earth's natural systems.
Authentic connections *How does this topic connect to real life, careers, other subjects and important values?*	

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This theme links directly to contemporary environmental challenges including climate change, extreme weather, biodiversity loss and sustainable ecosystem management. SMSC is developed through considering humanity's responsibility for protecting the natural environment, reflecting on the value of biodiversity and exploring how environmental change affects communities across the world.

British Values are promoted through evidence-based debate, respect for differing viewpoints surrounding climate change and sustainability, and discussion of how governments, organisations and individuals can respond responsibly to environmental challenges. Citizenship links include environmental stewardship, sustainability, conservation and global responsibility. PSHE/RSHE links include understanding personal responsibility for sustainable lifestyles, decision making, resilience during extreme weather events and promoting wellbeing through engagement with the natural environment.

Careers include meteorologist, climate scientist, ecologist, environmental consultant, conservation officer, sustainability manager, flood risk engineer, environmental planner and climate policy advisor.

The enquiry supports the Skills Builder Universal Framework, particularly:

- Problem Solving through evaluating environmental management and climate adaptation strategies.
- Planning through considering sustainable ecosystem management and responses to environmental change.
- Speaking through presenting evidence-based judgements about climate change, weather hazards and biodiversity.

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, climate graphs, weather charts, satellite imagery, Met Office datasets, IPCC reports, WWF resources, Natural England publications, aerial photography, documentaries, news articles, academic case studies and fieldwork data.	Students complete an end-of-theme assessment linked to Eduqas GCSE Geography Component 1. Assessment tasks require students to interpret climate graphs, weather charts, atmospheric circulation diagrams, ecosystem maps and located case study evidence before constructing extended responses explaining physical processes and evaluating strategies used to manage weather hazards, climate change and ecosystems. Students demonstrate substantive knowledge through their understanding of Quaternary climate change, the carbon cycle, the greenhouse effect, atmospheric circulation, weather hazards, UK weather and climate, ecosystems, biodiversity and sustainable ecosystem management. Disciplinary knowledge is assessed through interpreting unfamiliar geographical resources, analysing patterns and relationships, explaining cycles and flows, applying evidence from located examples and evaluating environmental management strategies.

Terms 3 and 4 Paper 2	**Theme 6 and 7: Development, Resource Issues and Social Development**

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Big Picture

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

Students investigate why levels of development vary across the world and explore the complex relationships between economic growth, social progress and environmental sustainability. They examine how development is measured using a range of economic and social indicators before considering the causes and consequences of global inequality. Students investigate the opportunities and challenges associated with development, resource use and globalisation, evaluating how countries can improve quality of life whilst managing finite resources sustainably. Throughout the theme, students consider how decisions made at local, national and global scales influence the future of people and places.

Zoom In

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

The enquiry begins by exploring global development and inequality. Students investigate how development is measured using a range of economic, social and environmental indicators before considering the strengths and limitations of measures such as Gross National Income (GNI) and the Human Development Index (HDI). They examine the causes of uneven development and investigate why opportunities and quality of life vary significantly across the world.

Attention then turns to resource management and sustainability. Students investigate the growing global demand for food, water and energy, considering how increasing populations and economic development place pressure on finite resources. They evaluate contrasting approaches to resource management and explore how governments, businesses and international organisations attempt to balance economic growth with environmental sustainability.

The final part of the enquiry focuses on social development. Students investigate how education, healthcare, housing, sanitation, equality and access to essential services influence quality of life. They evaluate strategies designed to reduce global inequalities and improve wellbeing, considering the role of aid, trade, technology and sustainable development in creating more resilient communities.

The enquiry is structured around focused questions including:

- How is development measured?
- Why are some countries more developed than others?
- What causes global inequalities?
- How can food, water and energy resources be managed sustainably?
- What is social development?
- How can quality of life be improved?
- What role do governments and international organisations play in reducing inequality?
- How can sustainable development create better geographical futures?

Key vocabulary includes development, inequality, Human Development Index, Gross National Income, quality of life, sustainability, globalisation, food security, water security, energy security, renewable resources, non-renewable resources, aid, trade, governance, infrastructure, social development, wellbeing and appropriate technology.

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

Students build upon their understanding of human geography developed throughout Key Stage 3 and earlier GCSE themes, particularly Rural-Urban Links and Weather, Climate and Ecosystems. Previous learning about population, settlement, urbanisation, sustainability and global processes enables students to understand the interconnected nature of development, resource use and quality of life. Students also draw upon the geographical skills developed throughout the course, including data interpretation, map analysis and evaluation of geographical evidence.

Pitch Up
How will we challenge ourselves?

Students are challenged to think critically about why development varies across the world and to recognise that there are often no simple solutions to global inequality. They evaluate contrasting development strategies, assess the sustainability of different approaches to resource management and justify geographical decisions using evidence from a range of sources.

The most able students confidently synthesise information from multiple datasets and case studies, applying geographical concepts such as interconnectedness, inequality, scale, place, process and change, and geographical futures to construct sophisticated evaluative responses that consider environmental, economic and social perspectives.

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

This theme develops students' understanding of the complex relationships between people, places and resources within an increasingly interconnected world. It prepares students for the geographical investigations undertaken during Topic 6 by strengthening their ability to analyse evidence, evaluate contrasting viewpoints and make reasoned judgements about contemporary geographical issues. The knowledge and skills developed also provide an excellent foundation for further study in Geography, Economics, Environmental Science, International Development and Politics.

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

Students explore how ideas about development have changed over time, from early measures based purely on economic growth to modern approaches that place greater emphasis on wellbeing, equality and sustainability. They investigate the work of organisations such as the United Nations, whose Sustainable Development Goals provide a global framework for improving quality of life whilst protecting the planet, alongside the work of charities and non-governmental organisations that support communities around the world.

Students consider contemporary debates surrounding ethical trade, globalisation, renewable energy, food security and water scarcity, recognising that geographical decisions often involve balancing competing priorities. Through real-world examples, they appreciate how geography informs international policy, humanitarian aid and sustainable development planning.

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

This theme links directly to global development, inequality, resource security and the challenges of creating a more sustainable and equitable world. SMSC is developed through exploring fairness, equality, human rights and the ethical responsibilities associated with reducing poverty and improving quality of life for people across the globe.

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British Values are promoted through evidence-based discussion, respect for different cultures and perspectives, and consideration of how governments and international organisations work together to improve development outcomes. Citizenship links include global citizenship, sustainable development, responsible resource use, international cooperation and social justice. PSHE/RSHE links include equality of opportunity, health and wellbeing, financial awareness, informed decision making and understanding the factors that influence life chances.

Careers include international development officer, humanitarian aid worker, sustainability consultant, economist, environmental planner, policy advisor, charity programme manager, renewable energy consultant and United Nations development specialist.

The enquiry supports the Skills Builder Universal Framework, particularly:

- Problem Solving through evaluating strategies to reduce inequality and improve resource security.
- Leadership through considering how governments, organisations and communities can influence sustainable development.
- Speaking through presenting balanced, evidence-based judgements about development and resource management.

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, United Nations Sustainable Development Goals resources, World Bank datasets, Gapminder, Our World in Data, GIS mapping, Ordnance Survey resources, news articles, documentaries, charity publications, case studies, population and development statistics, and a range of geographical maps, graphs and data sets.	Students complete an end-of-theme assessment linked to Eduqas GCSE Geography Component 2. Assessment tasks require students to interpret development indicators, resource distribution maps, graphs, located case study evidence and decision-making scenarios before constructing extended responses evaluating strategies to reduce inequality and promote sustainable development. Students demonstrate substantive knowledge through their understanding of economic, social and environmental development, measures of development, resource management, food, water and energy security, global inequalities and sustainable development strategies. Disciplinary knowledge is assessed through interpreting unfamiliar geographical data, comparing places at different levels of development, analysing patterns and relationships, evaluating contrasting viewpoints and making evidence-based geographical judgements about development and resource management.

Term 5 Paper 3	**Geographical Investigations and Fieldwork**

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Big Picture

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

Students bring together the knowledge, understanding and skills developed throughout GCSE Geography by applying them to real-world geographical investigations. Through fieldwork undertaken in Greenwich and contrasting locations within London, students experience the full geographical enquiry process, from asking meaningful questions and collecting evidence to analysing data, drawing conclusions and evaluating the reliability of their investigations.

As the methodological approach and geographical concept assessed by Eduqas rotate regularly, students develop a broad understanding of geographical enquiry rather than preparing for a single investigation. They learn to apply geographical concepts, fieldwork techniques and analytical skills confidently to unfamiliar contexts, preparing them for success in Component 3 and for further geographical study.

Zoom In

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

The enquiry begins by exploring the geographical enquiry process, with students developing questions, hypotheses and suitable methods for investigating geographical issues in the field. They consider how enquiries are designed, how data can be collected safely and ethically and how appropriate sampling strategies improve the reliability and validity of investigations.

Attention then turns to fieldwork in Greenwich and contrasting locations within London. Students undertake investigations using a range of qualitative and quantitative methods, recognising that the specific geographical concept and methodology studied will vary in line with the rotating Eduqas specification. They collect primary data, make observations, record evidence systematically and apply a range of geographical skills in authentic environments.

The final part of the enquiry focuses on analysis, evaluation and decision making. Students present and interpret fieldwork data using maps, graphs, GIS and statistical techniques before drawing evidence-based conclusions. They evaluate the strengths and limitations of their investigations, consider how methodologies could be improved and apply their enquiry skills to unfamiliar fieldwork scenarios in preparation for Component 3 of the GCSE examination.

The enquiry is structured around focused questions including:

- How do geographers investigate places?
- How can geographical enquiries be planned effectively?
- Which fieldwork methods are most appropriate for different investigations?
- How can primary and secondary data be collected reliably?
- How should geographical data be presented and analysed?
- What conclusions can be drawn from fieldwork evidence?
- How can the reliability and validity of investigations be evaluated?
- How can geographical enquiry skills be applied to unfamiliar contexts?

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Key vocabulary includes geographical enquiry, hypothesis, sampling, primary data, secondary data, qualitative data, quantitative data, reliability, validity, GIS, environmental quality survey, pedestrian count, questionnaire, bipolar survey, annotation, evaluation, conclusion, fieldwork methodology and evidence.

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

Students draw upon all learning from their previous studies, applying their understanding of both physical and human geography to real-world investigations. Previous experience of geographical skills, map work, data presentation, interpretation and evaluation enables students to undertake increasingly independent enquiries and confidently apply their knowledge to unfamiliar contexts.

Pitch Up
How will we challenge ourselves?

Students are challenged to think and work as independent geographers, selecting appropriate fieldwork methods, evaluating the strengths and limitations of different approaches and applying geographical concepts to unfamiliar investigations. They synthesise knowledge from across the GCSE course, using evidence collected in the field to justify balanced conclusions and informed geographical decisions.
The most able students confidently evaluate methodological choices, consider reliability and validity in depth, and apply conceptual understanding such as place, process, change, interconnectedness, scale, inequality, cycles and flows and geographical futures when interpreting unfamiliar fieldwork scenarios.

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

Applied geographical enquiry represents the culmination of the GCSE Geography course, bringing together substantive knowledge and disciplinary thinking developed throughout Themes 1–5. Students strengthen their investigative, analytical and evaluative skills whilst preparing for further study in Geography, Environmental Science and a wide range of careers that require evidence-based decision making and spatial analysis.

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

Fieldwork lies at the heart of geography as an academic discipline. Students explore how geographers have long sought to understand places through observation, measurement and investigation, from the early expeditions of the Royal Geographical Society to the use of modern technologies such as Geographical Information Systems (GIS), satellite imagery and digital data collection.

Through investigations in London, students appreciate that geography is not confined to textbooks but is an active discipline that seeks to explain how places function and change over time. They recognise that the enquiry skills developed during fieldwork are used by environmental scientists, planners, engineers, governments and researchers to make informed decisions about the future of communities and environments.

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

This theme places students in the role of practising geographers, applying geographical knowledge and enquiry skills to real-world investigations in Greenwich and contrasting locations within London. SMSC is developed through encouraging curiosity about places, respecting the communities and environments being studied and reflecting on the responsibility of collecting, interpreting and presenting evidence accurately and ethically.

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British Values are promoted through collaborative investigation, respectful discussion of geographical evidence and appreciation of different perspectives when reaching informed conclusions. Citizenship links include community engagement, responsible fieldwork, evidence-based decision making and understanding how geographical investigations inform planning and environmental management. PSHE/RSHE links include teamwork, communication, resilience, personal responsibility, risk awareness, independence and safe conduct when working beyond the classroom.

Careers include environmental consultant, GIS analyst, town planner, surveyor, transport planner, conservation officer, geospatial data scientist, environmental researcher and urban planner.

The enquiry supports the Skills Builder Universal Framework, particularly:

- Planning through designing geographical investigations and selecting appropriate fieldwork methods.
- Teamwork through collecting, analysing and evaluating fieldwork collaboratively.
- Problem Solving through interpreting evidence, evaluating investigations and making well-supported geographical judgements.

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, Ordnance Survey maps, GIS software, fieldwork booklets, aerial photography, satellite imagery, questionnaires, environmental quality surveys, pedestrian count sheets, bipolar surveys, census data, Office for National Statistics datasets, fieldwork equipment, and a range of primary and secondary geographical data collected from Greenwich and contrasting locations within London.	Students complete an end-of-theme assessment linked to Eduqas GCSE Geography Component 3. Assessment tasks require students to interpret unfamiliar fieldwork scenarios, geographical data, maps, graphs, photographs and enquiry evidence before constructing extended responses that justify fieldwork decisions, evaluate investigations and apply geographical concepts to unfamiliar contexts. Students demonstrate substantive knowledge through their understanding of the geographical enquiry process, fieldwork methodologies, sampling strategies, data presentation techniques and the conceptual frameworks that underpin geographical investigations. Disciplinary knowledge is assessed through designing investigations, interpreting unfamiliar evidence, analysing patterns and relationships, evaluating methodological choices and making justified geographical decisions supported by evidence.