New Line Learning Academy
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Geography Curriculum Intent

Year 7

The Year 7 Geography curriculum introduces students to the fascinating world of geography by exploring the physical processes that shape our planet and the ways people interact with diverse environments. Through a series of enquiry-based investigations, students develop the core geographical knowledge, skills and vocabulary that underpin future study, while discovering how geography helps us understand both the natural world and our place within it.

Throughout the year, students investigate:

- How do Earth's physical processes shape our planet?
- Why does Antarctica matter to the rest of the world?
- Why does weather change from place to place?
- How do living things survive in extreme environments?
- Why do we live here?
- Why is the Amazon rainforest so important?

Each enquiry builds upon the last, allowing students to develop an increasingly sophisticated understanding of how physical and human geography are interconnected. Along the way, they explore topics including tectonic processes, glaciers, weather systems, climate, ecosystems, adaptation, biodiversity, settlements, urban development, sustainability, rivers and tropical rainforests, using a range of local and global case studies including Mount Vesuvius, Maidstone, Antarctica, the Sahara Desert, The Bedouin people, and the Amazon Basin.

Throughout the year, students strengthen their geographical thinking by interpreting maps, OS maps, aerial photographs, satellite imagery, climate graphs, GIS and geographical data, while developing the confidence to analyse evidence, identify spatial patterns, evaluate different viewpoints and construct balanced geographical judgements. By the end of Year 7, students understand that geography is far more than learning about places, it is about explaining how physical and human processes interact to shape the world and recognising how informed decisions can help create a more sustainable future.

Term 1
Enquiry

How do Earth's physical processes shape our planet?

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

Students begin their geographical journey by investigating the dynamic processes that continually shape our planet. Through the study of Earth's structure, rock formation and plate tectonics, they discover that the landscapes around them have been created over millions of years by powerful physical processes beneath the Earth's surface. They explore how volcanoes and earthquakes occur, why tectonic hazards are concentrated in particular locations and how people adapt to living

alongside them. The enquiry establishes the fundamental geographical concepts of place, process, interdependence, scale and change, providing the foundations for future study of physical geography throughout Key Stage 3 and GCSE.

Zoom In

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

The enquiry begins by introducing Geography as the study of the Earth's physical and human environments, encouraging students to consider how our planet is constantly changing. Students investigate the structure of the Earth, discovering how its layers generate the immense forces responsible for tectonic activity. Through becoming geological detectives, they examine different rock types, identifying the characteristics of igneous, sedimentary and metamorphic rocks and explaining how each reveals the story of Earth's past. Students develop their understanding of the key geographical concepts of process, change and place, using accurate geographical vocabulary to explain physical processes. This enquiry fulfils the National Curriculum expectation that students develop contextual knowledge of globally significant places and deepen their understanding of the Earth's key physical processes.

Attention then turns to the theory of plate tectonics, exploring how the movement of tectonic plates creates earthquakes, volcanoes and mountain ranges. Students investigate different types of plate boundaries, interpret tectonic maps, analyse geological evidence and identify global patterns in the distribution of natural hazards. Through this, they develop disciplinary geographical knowledge by interpreting a range of geographical sources, recognising spatial patterns, explaining physical processes and applying evidence to geographical questions. The enquiry supports the National Curriculum by developing students' ability to interpret maps, use geographical data and think critically about physical processes operating at different scales.

The enquiry concludes by applying this understanding to the eruption of Mount Vesuvius, linking with their History studies of Pompeii. Students evaluate why communities continue to live in hazardous environments, weighing environmental risks against social and economic opportunities before reaching an evidence-based geographical judgement. Throughout the enquiry, students strengthen both their substantive understanding of tectonic processes and their disciplinary skills of analysing evidence, constructing explanations and communicating balanced geographical judgements using appropriate geographical terminology.

Enquiry Questions

- How is the Earth structured?
- How are different rocks formed?
- Why do tectonic plates move?
- Why are volcanoes and earthquakes found in particular places?
- How do volcanoes shape landscapes?
- Should people continue to live near active volcanoes?

Key Vocabulary: Crust, mantle, outer core, inner core, tectonic plate, lithosphere, magma, lava, volcano, earthquake, plate boundary, constructive, destructive, conservative, igneous, sedimentary, metamorphic, weathering, erosion, hazard, resilience.

Pre-Requisite Knowledge

What have we already learned that will help us with this topic?

Pitch Up

How will we challenge ourselves?

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Students build upon their Key Stage 2 understanding of continents, oceans, simple map work and physical features of the Earth. They draw upon prior learning about natural environments and begin to explain physical processes using increasingly accurate geographical vocabulary. No prior knowledge of tectonic theory is assumed, allowing all students to develop a secure understanding of the Earth's internal structure and the processes that shape landscapes.	Students extend their thinking by interpreting geological evidence, analysing tectonic maps and evaluating the relationship between physical processes and human activity. They investigate how scientific evidence supports the theory of plate tectonics and use a range of geographical sources to explain why hazards occur in particular places. Higher-order thinking is developed through evaluating whether people should continue living in tectonically active regions, considering environmental, social and economic perspectives before forming balanced judgements supported by evidence.

Wider Framework

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

This enquiry provides the foundation for all future physical geography. Students develop the knowledge required to understand weather and climate, rivers, coasts, ecosystems and natural hazards later in Key Stage 3 before revisiting these concepts in greater depth at GCSE. The enquiry also complements their History studies of Pompeii by explaining the geographical processes that created Mount Vesuvius and the hazards experienced by Roman communities, demonstrating how different disciplines offer distinct perspectives on the same historical event.

Curriculum Hinterland

What wider knowledge will deepen our understanding of this topic?

Students explore the fascinating history of Alfred Wegener's theory of continental drift and how ideas once dismissed by scientists eventually transformed our understanding of the Earth. They investigate some of the world's most spectacular geological features, including the Mid-Atlantic Ridge, the Himalayas, Iceland and the Pacific Ring of Fire, recognising that the Earth's surface continues to evolve today. Through studying volcanic rocks and geological timescales, students gain an appreciation of the immense age of our planet and the processes that have shaped it over billions of years.

Authentic connections

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

Through this enquiry, students develop social understanding by exploring how tectonic hazards affect communities around the world and how people adapt to living in environments shaped by powerful natural processes. Moral understanding is developed through evaluating whether communities should continue to live in areas of volcanic and seismic activity, balancing environmental risks with social and economic opportunities. Students experience spiritual development by considering the immense scale and power of the Earth's natural processes and humanity's place within an ever-changing planet. Cultural understanding is developed through investigating how countries such as Italy, Japan and Iceland have adapted to living with tectonic hazards.

The enquiry has strong explicit links to Citizenship through exploring emergency planning, community resilience, disaster management and the role of governments in protecting vulnerable populations. Students also make meaningful connections with History through their study of Pompeii, using geographical understanding to explain why Mount Vesuvius erupted and how physical processes shaped one of history's most significant natural disasters.

Skills Builder focuses on:

- Problem Solving – students analyse geological evidence, identify patterns in tectonic activity and use geographical knowledge to explain why hazards occur in different locations.

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- Speaking – students justify geographical decisions and communicate evidence-based judgements when evaluating whether people should continue living in tectonically active regions.

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, geological maps, tectonic plate maps, British Geological Survey resources, rock samples, satellite imagery, aerial photography, diagrams of the Earth's structure, USGS earthquake data, documentaries, news reports and located volcanic and earthquake case studies.	Students complete an end-of-enquiry assessment linked to the concepts of tectonic processes and natural hazards. The assessment requires students to interpret geological maps, tectonic plate maps, diagrams, photographs and geographical data to explain how physical processes shape the Earth's surface and influence where people live. Substantive Knowledge (60%) assesses students' understanding of the Earth's structure, rock formation, plate tectonics, earthquakes, volcanoes and the distribution of tectonic hazards. Disciplinary Knowledge (40%) assesses students' ability to interpret geographical sources, identify patterns, explain physical processes, analyse evidence and construct reasoned geographical judgements using appropriate geographical vocabulary.

Term 2
Enquiry

Why does Antarctica matter to the rest of the world?

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

This term immerses students in the extreme and fascinating environment of Antarctica and the wider cryosphere. Students investigate how frozen environments shape global climate systems, ecosystems, and sea levels, while exploring why Antarctica is one of the most important regions on Earth for understanding climate change and environmental protection. Through studying Antarctica, students develop an appreciation of how interconnected the world is and why international cooperation is needed to protect fragile global environments.

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

Students explore the cryosphere and investigate where glaciers are found, how they form, move, and change over time, and why frozen environments are concentrated around the polar regions. They develop substantive knowledge of Antarctica's location, climate, ecosystems, food webs, adaptation, tourism, treaties, and climate change. Students investigate what Antarctica is like, how scientists and explorers survive there, and why the continent is considered part of the global commons.

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Throughout the enquiry, students explore key geographical questions including:

- What is the cryosphere?
- Who owns Antarctica?
- How do animals survive in extreme conditions?
- Why do people work in Antarctica?
- How is climate change affecting Antarctica and the wider world?

Students examine how animals such as penguins and seals are specially adapted to survive in extreme cold, investigate the role of scientific research stations, and consider how the Antarctic Treaty protects the continent from exploitation and environmental damage.
Students also explore how climate change is affecting Antarctica through rising temperatures, melting ice, and changing ecosystems, while considering the wider global impacts such as sea level rise and threats to biodiversity.

Alongside this, students develop disciplinary knowledge through interpreting climate graphs, describing locations using maps and compass directions, analysing geographical evidence, interpreting patterns and trends, and applying geographical reasoning to environmental issues. Key vocabulary including cryosphere, glacier, adaptation, climate change, treaty, tourism, mitigation, accumulation, and ablation is explicitly taught and revisited throughout the enquiry.
Students also engage with real Antarctic scientists through the UK Polar Network, writing letters to researchers currently working in Antarctica. As part of the enquiry, students take part in a national Antarctic flag design competition, encouraging creativity and engagement with themes of exploration, cooperation, and environmental stewardship.

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

Students may already understand basic concepts of weather, climate, ecosystems, and map skills from previous Geography and Science learning. They may also have prior knowledge of continents, latitude and longitude, and global locations from the first enquiry.

This enquiry builds on those foundations by introducing students to extreme climates, glaciation, adaptation, global environmental systems, and human interaction with fragile environments. Students continue to strengthen key geographical skills including data interpretation, map analysis, graph interpretation, and extended geographical writing.

Pitch Up
How will we challenge ourselves?

Students are challenged to think critically about the balance between exploration, scientific research, tourism, and environmental protection in Antarctica. They analyse climate data, interpret geographical evidence, and evaluate how climate change in Antarctica can affect the wider world through rising sea levels and changing global systems.

Students apply their knowledge to unfamiliar scenarios through extended writing, interpretation of geographical data, and evaluative tasks linked to conservation and sustainability. They are encouraged to justify conclusions using evidence and increasingly sophisticated geographical terminology.

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?

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This enquiry provides important foundations for future learning about climate change, ecosystems, sustainability, weather and climate, and resource management. Students develop an understanding of how physical and human processes are interconnected and how local environmental changes can have global consequences. The enquiry also strengthens key disciplinary skills including analysing geographical evidence, interpreting climate data, evaluating environmental issues, and constructing evidence based geographical explanations, all of which will be revisited throughout Key Stage 3 and GCSE Geography.	Studying Antarctica helps students understand how changes in one environment can affect the rest of the world, particularly through climate change and sea level rise. The enquiry introduces students to wider ideas surrounding conservation, international cooperation, scientific discovery, and humanity's responsibility to protect shared global environments. Students also gain insight into careers, lifestyles, and scientific research in some of the world's most extreme conditions.

Authentic connections

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

Through this enquiry, students develop social understanding by exploring how nations work together to protect Antarctica through international cooperation and scientific research. Moral understanding is developed through evaluating the responsibilities of people and governments in protecting fragile environments and considering the impact of tourism and climate change on future generations. Students experience spiritual development through reflecting on the beauty, scale and uniqueness of one of Earth's last great wildernesses. Cultural understanding is developed through investigating how scientists from different countries collaborate to advance our understanding of the planet.

The enquiry has strong explicit links to Citizenship through exploring international cooperation, environmental responsibility, conservation and the role of global agreements such as the Antarctic Treaty.

Skills Builder focuses on:

- Listening – students gather and interpret information from documentaries, guest scientists and a range of geographical sources to build secure geographical understanding.
- Teamwork – students collaborate to investigate Antarctica's physical and human geography, sharing evidence and developing collective geographical explanations.
- Creativity – students apply their understanding by designing adapted Antarctic animals and proposing ways to protect the frozen continent using imaginative but scientifically informed solutions.

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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○ Read: Cool Antarctica Facts and Information ○ Read: British Antarctic Survey – About Antarctica ○ Explore: UK Polar Network ○ Watch: BBC Frozen Planet ○ Watch: BBC Bitesize Antarctica ○ Explore: Google Earth Antarctica ○ Investigate: British Antarctic Survey Virtual Tours ○ Explore: National Geographic Antarctica Resources ○ Read: NASA Climate Kids – Climate Change and Ice ○ Explore: World Wildlife Fund Antarctica	Students complete an end-of-enquiry assessment requiring them to interpret climate graphs, maps, photographs, scientific data and geographical sources to explain why Antarctica is globally significant. Students demonstrate Substantive Knowledge (60%) through their understanding of the cryosphere, glaciers, Antarctica, wildlife adaptations, the Antarctic Treaty, tourism and climate change. Disciplinary Knowledge (40%) assesses students' ability to interpret geographical evidence, analyse environmental data, explain physical and human processes, and construct balanced, evidence-based judgements about the future management and protection of Antarctica.

Term 3
Enquiry

Why does weather change from place to place?

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

This enquiry explores how weather and climate shape the world around us at local, national, and global scales. Students investigate why the UK experiences such varied and unpredictable weather, how global atmospheric systems influence climate, and how weather affects people, environments, and everyday life. Through studying weather and climate, students develop an understanding of how Earth's physical systems are interconnected and why understanding weather is increasingly important in a changing climate. By linking global systems to local fieldwork investigations around the school site, students develop an appreciation of how weather operates at multiple scales. The enquiry encourages students to think critically about how climate and weather affect human activity and how geographers use data, observations, and fieldwork to understand the dynamic systems shaping our planet.

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

Students develop substantive knowledge of key weather and climate processes including the difference between weather and climate, the hydrological cycle, air masses, depressions, jet streams, ocean currents, and the factors that influence climate at local and global scales. Students investigate how and why the UK experiences varied and changeable weather, how microclimates form, and the causes and impacts of extreme weather events. They also develop understanding of climate graphs, weather hazards, and how physical processes influence human activity and environments.

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Students explore key geographical questions including:

- Why is the UK's weather so changeable?
- How do global systems influence climate?
- What causes extreme weather?
- How do microclimates develop in local areas?

Alongside this, students develop disciplinary knowledge through geographical enquiry and fieldwork. A key focus of the enquiry is a microclimate investigation around the school site where students formulate hypotheses, collect primary data using anemometers and the onsite weather station, and compare their findings with secondary data from the Met Office. Students develop skills in data collection, recording, presentation, graph interpretation, analysis of patterns and trends, and evaluation of the reliability and accuracy of evidence.

Students apply geographical reasoning by interpreting climate graphs, analysing weather maps and satellite imagery, and investigating how factors such as shelter, vegetation, surface materials, and buildings influence local environmental conditions. Through research into extreme weather case studies, students further develop their ability to interpret geographical evidence and apply understanding to real world events.

Key vocabulary including climate, precipitation, air mass, jet stream, microclimate, depression, evaporation, condensation, and extreme weather is explicitly taught and revisited throughout the enquiry.

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

Students may already be familiar with basic weather symbols, seasons, and simple climate ideas from primary Geography and Science. They will also have prior experience of map skills, data interpretation, and geographical vocabulary from earlier Year 7 enquiries.

This enquiry builds upon those foundations by introducing more complex atmospheric processes, climate systems, fieldwork methods, and geographical data analysis. Students continue to strengthen key disciplinary skills including graph interpretation, data collection, hypothesis testing, and analytical geographical writing.

Pitch Up
How will we challenge ourselves?

Students are challenged to think and work like geographers through independent fieldwork and real-world data analysis. During the microclimate enquiry, students design hypotheses, select and use geographical equipment accurately, collect and interpret primary data, and present conclusions using evidence. They evaluate the reliability of their findings while considering how local environmental factors influence weather conditions across the school site.

Students also apply their understanding to unfamiliar scenarios through analysing extreme weather events and interpreting climate data from the Met Office and other geographical sources. Through fieldwork, extended writing, and geographical reasoning, students develop increasingly analytical thinking and learn to justify conclusions using accurate geographical terminology.

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?

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This enquiry provides important foundations for future study of climate change, ecosystems, natural hazards, and sustainability across Key Stage 3 and GCSE Geography. Students develop an understanding of how physical systems influence environments and human activity at different scales. The enquiry also strengthens core geographical skills including fieldwork, data presentation, graph interpretation, statistical analysis, and evaluative writing, all of which are revisited throughout later geographical study and GCSE fieldwork investigations.	This enquiry helps students understand how weather and climate influence everyday life, infrastructure, environments, and global systems. Students explore how local weather connects to wider atmospheric systems and develop awareness of the increasing challenges posed by climate change and extreme weather events around the world.

Authentic connections

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

Through this enquiry, students develop social understanding by exploring how weather and climate affect communities, travel, safety, and everyday life. Moral understanding is developed through considering human responsibility surrounding climate change, sustainability, and preparation for extreme weather events. Students experience spiritual development through reflecting on the scale, power, and unpredictability of Earth's atmospheric systems. Cultural understanding is developed through comparing climates, weather hazards, and human adaptations in different parts of the world.

Cross curricular links are made with science through climate systems, the water cycle, energy transfer, and environmental processes. Links to Mathematics are developed through data collection, graph interpretation, averages, and statistical analysis.

The enquiry also supports employability and career related skills through the Skills Builder Universal Framework, particularly problem solving and teamwork. Students explore careers linked to meteorology, environmental science, climate research, aviation, engineering, and disaster management.

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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○ Read: BBC Bitesize Weather and Climate ○ Watch: Met Office Weather Explained ○ Explore: Met Office Climate Change Explained ○ Investigate: BBC News Climate and Weather ○ Explore: National Geographic Extreme Weather Resources ○ Use: Onsite weather station equipment, anemometers, climate graphs, weather maps, satellite imagery, and live weather data from the Met Office.	Students complete an end-of-enquiry assessment requiring them to interpret weather maps, climate graphs, satellite imagery, climate data and geographical sources to explain how atmospheric processes influence weather and climate across the world. Students apply their understanding to explain variations in weather, identify climatic patterns and evaluate the impacts of changing weather and climate on people and places. Substantive Knowledge (60%) assesses students' understanding of the atmosphere, weather and climate, the global circulation system, air masses, the water cycle, climate zones, factors affecting climate, extreme weather events and the causes and impacts of climate change. Disciplinary Knowledge (40%) assesses students' ability to interpret weather maps, analyse climate graphs and geographical data, identify spatial patterns, explain physical processes and construct evidence-based geographical explanations and judgements using appropriate geographical vocabulary.

Term 4
Enquiry

How do living things survive in extreme environments?

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

This enquiry explores one of the most extreme and fascinating biomes on Earth: deserts. Students investigate how plants, animals, and people adapt to survive in hot, arid environments where water is scarce and temperatures can be extreme. Through studying desert ecosystems, students develop an understanding of how physical environments shape human activity and how life can thrive in even the harshest conditions.

Students also explore the growing pressures facing desert environments, including desertification, water scarcity, urban development, and resource exploitation. The enquiry encourages students to think critically about sustainability and the balance between economic development and environmental protection in fragile ecosystems.

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

The enquiry begins by asking how life can survive in one of the harshest environments on Earth. Students locate the world's major hot deserts and investigate why they form, exploring the relationship between global atmospheric circulation, latitude and climate. They examine the characteristics of desert biomes, developing an understanding of how climate shapes landscapes and ecosystems. This enquiry fulfils the National Curriculum expectation that students develop contextual knowledge of globally significant places while understanding the interaction between physical and human processes.

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Attention then turns to the remarkable ways in which life has adapted to survive. Students develop substantive knowledge of desert ecosystems by investigating vegetation, biodiversity, food chains and food webs, alongside the physical and behavioural adaptations of plants, animals and people. Through studying indigenous communities and contrasting modern settlements, students explore how humans have adapted to live and work in environments where water is scarce and temperatures are extreme. Students also consider how deserts provide both opportunities and challenges through tourism, mineral extraction and renewable energy.

The enquiry then explores the growing pressures facing desert environments. Students investigate the causes and consequences of desertification, examining how climate change, population growth and unsustainable land use are transforming fragile ecosystems. Through interpreting climate graphs, maps, satellite imagery and geographical data, they develop disciplinary knowledge by recognising spatial patterns, analysing environmental evidence and explaining the interactions between people and the natural environment.

The enquiry concludes by evaluating whether large-scale developments can be sustainable within desert environments. Using The Line development in Saudi Arabia as a contemporary case study, students weigh the environmental, social and economic advantages and disadvantages before constructing balanced geographical judgements supported by evidence. Throughout the enquiry, students strengthen both their substantive understanding of desert ecosystems and their disciplinary skills of interpreting geographical evidence, analysing environmental issues and communicating evidence-based geographical arguments using appropriate geographical terminology.

Enquiry Questions

- Why do hot deserts form?
- What makes a desert biome unique?
- How do plants, animals and people survive in extreme conditions?
- Why are deserts changing?
- What causes desertification?
- Can deserts support sustainable development?
- Should projects such as The Line be built?

Key vocabulary including biome, arid, adaptation, desertification, sustainability, water scarcity, ecosystem, biodiversity, oasis, and development is explicitly taught and revisited 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?*
Students may already have basic understanding of ecosystems, climate, adaptation, and environmental issues from previous Geography and Science learning, including earlier Year 7 enquiries on Antarctica, rainforests, and weather and climate.	Students are challenged to think critically about the balance between human development and environmental sustainability in fragile desert environments. They analyse the causes and impacts of desertification, evaluate how people adapt to water scarcity and extreme climates, and investigate whether modern developments such as The Line can truly be sustainable.

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This enquiry builds upon those foundations by developing students' understanding of extreme environments, sustainability, biodiversity, and the relationship between human activity and fragile ecosystems. Students continue to strengthen disciplinary skills including interpretation of geographical evidence, data analysis, evaluative thinking, and extended geographical writing.

Students apply their understanding to unfamiliar scenarios through interpreting geographical evidence, analysing environmental issues, and evaluating possible solutions to challenges facing desert regions. Through discussion, extended writing, and evaluative tasks, students develop increasingly analytical geographical thinking and learn to justify conclusions using evidence and accurate geographical terminology.

Wider Framework

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

This enquiry provides important foundations for future learning about ecosystems, climate change, sustainability, resource management, and development across Key Stage 3 and GCSE Geography. Students develop understanding of how physical and human processes interact within extreme environments and how environmental challenges can have social, economic, and global consequences.

The enquiry also strengthens geographical skills including interpretation of climate data, analysis of environmental evidence, evaluative writing, and evidence based geographical reasoning, which are revisited throughout future geographical study.

Curriculum Hinterland

What wider knowledge will deepen our understanding of this topic?

This enquiry helps students understand the delicate balance required for life to survive in extreme environments and how human activity can threaten fragile ecosystems.

Students explore the global connections between resource use, consumer choices, development, and environmental sustainability while developing awareness of how geography influences the way people live around the world.

Authentic connections

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

Through this enquiry, students develop social understanding by exploring the challenges faced by communities living in desert regions and how people adapt to harsh environmental conditions. Moral understanding is developed through considering sustainable resource use, water management, and the environmental impacts of development in fragile ecosystems.

Students experience spiritual development through appreciating the beauty, scale, and resilience of desert landscapes and ecosystems. Cultural understanding is developed through exploring indigenous lifestyles, traditions, and knowledge within arid environments.

Cross curricular links are made with science through ecosystems, adaptation, biodiversity, climate, and water cycles. Links to Citizenship are developed through sustainability, resource use, and environmental decision making.

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The enquiry also supports employability and career related skills through the Skills Builder Universal Framework, particularly adapting, problem solving and creativity. Students explore careers linked to environmental science, conservation, sustainability, engineering, urban planning, and renewable energy.

Resources *What books, websites, videos and materials will support our learning?*	**Assessment** *How will we show what we know, remember and can apply?*
○ Read: National Geographic Deserts ○ Watch: BBC Planet Earth – Deserts ○ Explore: BBC Bitesize Desert Biomes ○ Investigate: National Geographic Desert Ecosystems ○ Read: WWF Desert Habitats ○ Explore: NEOM – The Line Project ○ Explore: Google Earth Desert Landscapes to investigate desert landforms, settlements, and environments around the world. ○ Read: NASA Climate Kids – Drought and Desertification ○ Investigate: National Geographic Kids Desert Facts	Students complete an end-of-enquiry assessment requiring them to interpret climate graphs, biome maps, photographs, population data and geographical sources to explain how ecosystems function and how plants, animals and people adapt to living in extreme environments. Students evaluate the opportunities and challenges associated with desert environments and consider how human activity influences fragile ecosystems. Substantive Knowledge (60%) assesses students' understanding of ecosystems, biomes, food webs, desert environments, adaptations, water scarcity, desertification, biodiversity and the interactions between people and the natural environment. Disciplinary Knowledge (40%) assesses students' ability to interpret maps, climate graphs and geographical evidence, identify relationships between climate and ecosystems, explain environmental processes and construct balanced geographical judgements using appropriate geographical vocabulary.

Term 5
Enquiry

Why do we live here? *How has Maidstone grown and changed over time?*

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

Students investigate why people choose to live in particular places by exploring the growth and development of Maidstone as a case study. Beginning with the geographical factors that influence settlement location, students discover how rivers, transport routes, natural resources and physical landscapes have shaped where communities develop. They examine how settlements evolve from small villages into towns and cities, how land use changes over time and why different parts of a settlement serve different purposes. Throughout the enquiry, students apply their learning to the place they know best, developing an understanding of why Maidstone has grown into the county town of Kent and considering how it may continue to change in the future.

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

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The enquiry begins by asking a simple but powerful question: "Why do we live here?" Using Maidstone as a local case study, students investigate why settlements first developed in locations and how physical features such as the River Medway, fertile land, transport routes and natural resources influenced where people chose to live. They explore the geographical concepts of site and situation, developing an understanding of why some settlements grow into important towns while others remain small villages. This enquiry fulfils the National Curriculum expectation that students develop contextual knowledge of the geography of the United Kingdom while understanding how physical and human processes interact to shape places.

Attention then turns to how Maidstone has changed over time. Students investigate settlement hierarchy, urbanisation, migration and land use, interpreting OS maps, historical maps, aerial photographs and population data to identify patterns of growth and explain why different areas of the town have developed in different ways. They begin to think like geographers by analysing spatial evidence, recognising how physical and human geography combine to influence where people live, work and travel, while considering the opportunities and challenges faced by a growing county town.

The enquiry concludes with a Decision-Making Exercise in which students take on the role of town planners responsible for the future development of Maidstone. Using a range of geographical evidence, including maps, planning proposals, environmental information and community viewpoints, they evaluate competing options for development before making a justified recommendation. Throughout the enquiry, students strengthen both their substantive understanding of settlement geography and their disciplinary skills of interpreting maps, analysing spatial data, evaluating evidence and communicating balanced geographical judgements using appropriate geographical terminology.

Pre-Requisite Knowledge

What have we already learned that will help us with this topic?

Students will already have experience of map skills, geographical terminology, environmental issues, and human and physical geography from previous Year 7 enquiries. They may also understand settlements, local geography, and land use from primary Geography learning.

This enquiry builds upon those foundations by developing students' understanding of settlement development, population change, urbanisation, and sustainable planning. Students continue to strengthen disciplinary skills including interpretation of maps and data, geographical decision making, evaluative thinking, and extended geographical communication.

Pitch Up

How will we challenge ourselves?

Students are challenged to think like urban planners and decision makers by applying geographical knowledge to real world planning scenarios. They evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of different settlement locations, consider how settlements can meet the needs of communities, and justify decisions linked to sustainability, transport, housing, and environmental impact.

Throughout the enquiry, students gradually build and refine their own settlement designs, applying learning from each lesson to increasingly complex planning decisions. Students are encouraged to evaluate different viewpoints, solve geographical problems creatively, and justify conclusions using evidence and accurate geographical terminology.

Through presenting and defending their settlement plans through Voice 21 Oracy activities, students further develop leadership, communication, reasoning, and public speaking skills.

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

This enquiry provides important foundations for future study of urbanisation, development, population, sustainability, and resource management across Key Stage 3 and GCSE Geography. Students develop understanding of how human and physical processes influence settlement growth and how geographical decisions affect people and environments.

The enquiry also strengthens core geographical skills including map interpretation, decision making, evaluative writing, presentation, and evidence based reasoning, which are revisited throughout future geographical study.

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

This enquiry helps students understand the relationship between people and places and how settlements reflect social, economic, environmental, and cultural influences.

Students explore how urban growth creates opportunities and challenges and develop awareness of the importance of sustainable and inclusive planning in shaping future communities.

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

Through this enquiry, students develop social understanding by considering how settlements meet the needs of different groups within society and how communities' function.

Moral understanding is developed through evaluating environmental sustainability, housing, resource use, and equality in urban planning decisions. Students experience spiritual development through reflecting on the importance of place, identity, and belonging within communities. Cultural understanding is developed through exploring how settlements and architecture are shaped by cultural influences, migration, and historical development.

Cross curricular links are made with Mathematics through scale, mapping, and data interpretation, Citizenship through community planning and decision making, and Design Technology through planning and creative design.

The enquiry also supports employability and career related skills through the Skills Builder Universal Framework, particularly leadership, planning and problem solving. Students explore careers linked to urban planning, architecture, civil engineering, environmental management, transport planning, and local government.

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

- Read: BBC Bitesize Settlements
- Watch: BBC Teach – Why Do People Move to Cities?
- Explore: National Geographic Urbanisation Resources

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

Students complete an end-of-enquiry assessment requiring them to interpret OS maps, settlement maps, land use models, population data and geographical sources to explain why settlements develop, grow and change over time. Students apply their understanding to evaluate the advantages and

○ Investigate: Google Earth to explore settlement patterns and urban growth ○ Read: United Nations Sustainable Cities ○ Explore: Ordnance Survey MapZone for map skills and settlement mapping ○ Watch: TED-Ed Urban Planning Videos ○ Investigate: Geography Realm Urban Geography ○ Explore: National Geographic Kids Cities Resources ○ Read: BBC News Housing and Urban Development	disadvantages of different settlement locations before making evidence-based decisions about future development. Substantive Knowledge (60%) assesses students' understanding of settlement location, site and situation, settlement hierarchy, urbanisation, migration, land use, sustainable settlements and the factors influencing settlement growth and change. Disciplinary Knowledge (40%) assesses students' ability to interpret maps and spatial data, identify geographical patterns, analyse evidence, justify settlement decisions and construct balanced geographical judgements using appropriate geographical terminology.

Term 6
Enquiry

Why is the Amazon rainforest so important?

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

This enquiry encourages students to investigate one of the world's most important physical environments: the Amazon Basin. Students explore how the Amazon Rainforest and the Amazon River work together to create one of the most biodiverse ecosystems on Earth. They discover how climate, water and vegetation are interconnected, why millions of people depend upon the rainforest, and why the Amazon plays a vital role in regulating the Earth's climate. Throughout the enquiry, students consider the challenges of balancing economic development with environmental protection, recognising that decisions made locally can have global consequences for biodiversity, climate and future generations.

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

The enquiry begins by introducing the Amazon Basin, locating the rainforest and river within South America and investigating why this region has developed into the world's largest tropical rainforest. Students explore the characteristics of tropical rainforest climates and discover how the Amazon River and its vast drainage basin provide the water needed to sustain this globally significant ecosystem. They are introduced to the key geographical concept of a river system, identifying the river's source, tributaries, drainage basin and mouth, while recognising how rivers shape landscapes and support both people and wildlife. This enquiry fulfils the National Curriculum expectation that students develop contextual knowledge of globally significant places and deepen their understanding of the interaction between physical and human processes.

Attention then turns to the rainforest itself. Students develop substantive knowledge of rainforest ecosystems by investigating the layers of the rainforest, biodiversity, food chains and food webs, adaptation and the relationships between climate, vegetation and wildlife. They explore how plants and animals have

adapted to survive within this unique environment and examine the importance of the Amazon in regulating climate, storing carbon and supporting life at local, regional and global scales.

The enquiry then examines the growing pressures facing the Amazon. Students investigate the causes of deforestation, including agriculture, logging, mining and the global demand for products such as palm oil, beef, timber and fast fashion. Through analysing maps, satellite imagery, photographs and real-world case studies, they develop disciplinary knowledge by interpreting geographical evidence, identifying patterns and evaluating how consumer choices connect people in the United Kingdom with environmental change in the Amazon.

The enquiry concludes with students considering how the Amazon can be protected for future generations. Taking on the role of environmental campaigners, they evaluate a range of conservation strategies before producing a persuasive campaign for the United Nations, using geographical evidence to justify realistic solutions that balance environmental protection with economic development. Throughout the enquiry, students strengthen both their substantive understanding of rainforest ecosystems and their disciplinary skills of analysing evidence, interpreting geographical data, constructing balanced geographical arguments and communicating evidence-based judgements using appropriate geographical terminology.

Enquiry Questions

- Why is the Amazon Basin so important?
- How does the Amazon River support the rainforest?
- How are plants and animals adapted to survive in the rainforest?
- Why is the Amazon one of the most biodiverse places on Earth?
- What causes deforestation?
- How are our everyday choices linked to the Amazon?
- How can the Amazon rainforest be protected?

Key vocabulary including ecosystem, biodiversity, deforestation, adaptation, sustainability, conservation, food web, climate, and habitat is explicitly taught and revisited throughout the enquiry.

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

Students build upon their understanding of weather, climate and ecosystems developed earlier in Year 7. Their knowledge of tropical climates from the Weather and Climate enquiry helps explain why the Amazon rainforest has developed, while previous learning about Antarctica and global environments reinforces how different biomes are shaped by climate.

Students also draw upon earlier map skills to locate the Amazon Basin and begin to understand how rivers connect landscapes, ecosystems and people.

Pitch Up
How will we challenge ourselves?

Students are challenged to think critically about the relationship between economic development and environmental sustainability. Throughout the enquiry, they investigate competing perspectives surrounding the Amazon, considering the needs of indigenous communities, farmers, governments, conservation organisations and multinational companies. Each lesson contributes evidence towards a final campaign to the United Nations, where students use geographical evidence to justify realistic solutions that balance environmental protection with human development.

New Line Learning Academy
Believe and Achieve

This enquiry introduces key river concepts that will be developed further in future studies of rivers and landscapes.	Students apply their understanding to unfamiliar scenarios by analysing maps, satellite imagery, climate data and environmental evidence before constructing balanced geographical arguments. Through persuasive writing, discussion and presentation opportunities, students develop increasingly analytical geographical thinking while strengthening communication, leadership and evidence-based decision making.
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 enquiry provides important foundations for future learning about river landscapes, ecosystems, climate change, biodiversity, sustainability and environmental management across Key Stage 3 and GCSE Geography. Students are introduced to the concept of river systems through the Amazon River, developing an understanding of drainage basins, tributaries and the relationship between rivers and ecosystems. These ideas are revisited in greater depth through future studies of rivers, landscapes and physical geography. The enquiry also strengthens geographical skills including interpretation of satellite imagery, maps, climate data and environmental evidence, alongside evaluative writing and evidence-based geographical decision making.	This enquiry broadens students' understanding of the Amazon Basin as one of the world's most significant physical environments. Students explore why the Amazon is often described as the "lungs of the Earth", while also evaluating why this phrase is both useful and scientifically debated. They investigate the incredible biodiversity of the rainforest, discover previously unknown species and consider the importance of indigenous knowledge in protecting fragile ecosystems. Students also examine how the Amazon River, the second longest river in the world and the largest by discharge, shapes the surrounding rainforest and supports millions of people. By exploring current environmental issues, including illegal logging, mining, agriculture and conservation, students appreciate the complex balance between economic development and environmental sustainability within an interconnected world.
Authentic connections *How does this topic connect to real life, careers, other subjects and important values?*	

New Line Learning Academy
Believe and Achieve

Through this enquiry, students develop social understanding by exploring how environmental challenges affect communities, indigenous groups, and future generations around the world. Moral understanding is developed through considering human responsibility for protecting ecosystems, biodiversity, and natural resources. Students experience spiritual development through appreciating the diversity, complexity, and beauty of rainforest environments and wildlife. Cultural understanding is developed through exploring how different communities and indigenous groups interact with and depend upon rainforest environments.

Cross curricular links are made with science through ecosystems, biodiversity, food webs, climate systems, adaptation and the water cycle. Links to English are developed through persuasive writing, campaigning, discussion and evaluative extended responses. Students also develop an understanding of global citizenship by considering how everyday consumer choices influence distant environments such as the Amazon Basin.

The enquiry also supports employability and career related skills through the Skills Builder Universal Framework, particularly communication, creativity and leadership. Students explore careers linked to conservation, environmental science, ecology, forestry, sustainability, and environmental campaigning.

Resources

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

- Read: WWF Deforestation Explained
- Watch: Our Planet – Forests Documentary
- Explore: BBC Bitesize Rainforests
- Investigate: National Geographic Rainforest Resources
- Read: Rainforest Alliance – Deforestation and Conservation
- Explore: World Wildlife Fund Rainforest Information
- Watch: BBC Earth Rainforest Clips
- Explore: Google Earth Amazon Rainforest
- Investigate: National Geographic Kids Rainforest Facts
- Read: Greenpeace Forest Campaigns
- Explore: Mongabay Rainforest News and Education

Assessment

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

Students complete an end-of-enquiry assessment requiring them to interpret maps of the Amazon Basin, river system diagrams, satellite imagery, climate graphs and geographical sources to explain how the Amazon River and rainforest work together to shape landscapes, ecosystems and human activity. Students evaluate the challenges of balancing economic development with environmental conservation before reaching an evidence-based geographical judgement.

Substantive Knowledge (60%) assesses students' understanding of tropical rainforests, river processes, drainage basins, erosion, transportation, deposition, flooding, deforestation, biodiversity, conservation and sustainable management.

Disciplinary Knowledge (40%) assesses students' ability to interpret maps, photographs, geographical data and environmental evidence, explain physical processes, analyse human-environment interactions and construct well-reasoned geographical judgements using appropriate geographical vocabulary.