AQA A Level Geography

The Geography Department sets its vision as developing: 'Curious, critical and skilled geographers who understand the world and their place within it.'

Intent: Curriculum Intent – AQA A Level Geography (7037)

Our AQA A Level Geography curriculum is designed to develop skilled, critical and independent geographers who seek to understand the relationships between people, places, processes and environments. Students explore how the world is shaped by interacting physical and human systems, recognising that geographical issues are interconnected and that change at one scale can have consequences at another. Students are encouraged to question the world around them, challenge assumptions and use geographical evidence to develop well-reasoned explanations and judgements.

The curriculum is carefully sequenced to build secure geographical knowledge across AQA's physical and human geography content, across paper 1 and 2. Students study Coastal Systems and Landscapes, Changing Places, Hazards, Global Systems and Global Governance in year 12. Then in year 13 student's study: Water and Carbon Cycles and Population and the Environment alongside completion of their NEA. Key geographical concepts including systems, processes, feedback, interdependence, sustainability, place and scale are sequenced and developed throughout the course, allowing students to make synoptic links between different areas of geographical knowledge and skill.

The curriculum develops students' ability to think geographically through case studies, contemporary issues and investigations. Students examine how physical processes shape landscapes and how human activity transforms places. They develop an appreciation of the dynamic and every evolving nature of places and the complex relationships between people and environments.

Geographical enquiry is central to the curriculum. Students develop confidence in collecting, analysing, interpreting and evaluating evidence using maps, GIS, graphical and statistical data, photographs and fieldwork techniques. These skills are embedded throughout the course as well as 4 days of fieldwork and culminate in the AQA independent NEA fieldwork investigation which students start planning at the end of Y12 and complete in the first term of Y13. This is where students develop their own geographical question based on their topic of interest, collect primary data and produce an NEA piece of fieldwork/coursework worth 20% of their grade.

The curriculum promotes independent geographical thinking and academic enquiry. Students move beyond just recalling case-study information to explaining relationships, analysing patterns, evaluating different approaches and making evidence-based judgements in 20-mark essays. Retrieval practice, explicit geographical vocabulary, reading, discussion and extended writing are embedded throughout the course to secure knowledge and develop students' transferable academic skills.

Through this curriculum, students are equipped not only to succeed in A Level Geography, but to become informed, questioning and environmentally/socially aware citizens who can understand and respond to the changing world around them.

Why study Geography at The Sixth Form at Ridgewood?

- Results in both 2020 and 2019 were strong. In 2020 50% of students achieved A*-A and 100% achieved A*-D
- In 2019 69% of students achieved A*-B and 88% achieved A*-C
- Students on the course benefit from four compulsory days of fieldwork undertaken over the two years including a city trip, a coastal trip and a two-day UK residential to complete the coursework element of the course.
- There have been many successful students who have gone on to study Geography-related degrees. Students have recently secured places at the Universities of York and Newcastle.
- The staff teaching the course have extensive and detailed subject knowledge, as well as a real passion for Geography.

What topics will I study in this subject?

Topic	What this means
Paper 1: Physical Component	**Water and carbon cycles** This section focuses on the major stores of water and carbon at or near the Earth's surface and the dynamic cyclical relationships associated with them. These are major elements in the natural environment and understanding them is fundamental to many aspects of physical Geography. **Coastal systems and landscapes** This section focus' on coastal zones, which are dynamic environments in which landscapes develop by the interaction of winds, waves, currents and terrestrial and marine sediments. **Hazards** This section focuses on the lithosphere and the atmosphere, which intermittently but regularly present natural hazards to human populations, often in dramatic and sometimes catastrophic fashion.
Paper 2: Human component	**Global systems and global governance** This section focuses on globalisation – the economic, political and social changes associated with technological and other driving forces which have been a key feature of global economy and society in recent decades. **Changing places** This section focuses on people's engagement with places, their experience of them and the qualities they ascribe to them, all of which are of fundamental importance in their lives. **Population and the environment** This section has been designed to explore the relationships between key aspects of physical geography and population numbers, population health and well-being, levels of economic development and the role and impact of the natural environment.
Non-Examined Assessment	In this element of the course, you will complete an individual investigation which must include data collected in the field. The individual investigation must be based on a question or issue defined and developed by you relating to any part of the specification content. This is the course work element of the course.

What skills will I need in this subject?

Skill	What this skill involves in this subject
Core skills	• Use and annotation of illustrative and visual material: base maps, sketch maps, OS maps (at a variety of scales), diagrams, graphs, field sketches, photographs, geospatial, geo-located and digital imagery • Use of overlays, both physical and electronic • Literacy – use of factual text and discursive/creative material and coding techniques when analysing text • Numeracy – use of number, measure and measurement

	• Questionnaire and interview techniques
Cartographical skills	Reading and overall interpretation of the map types below: • Weather maps – including synoptic charts (if applicable) • Atlas maps • Maps with located proportional symbols • Maps showing movement – flow lines, desire lines and trip lines • Maps showing spatial patterns – choropleth, isoline and dot maps
Graphical skills	To be able to create and interpret the different graph types below: • Line graphs – simple, comparative, compound and divergent • Bar graphs – simple, comparative, compound and divergent • Scatter graphs, and the use of best fit line • Pie charts and proportional divided circles • Triangular graphs • Graphs with logarithmic scales • Dispersion diagrams
Statistical skills	To be able to complete equations using the following methods: • Measures of central tendency – mean, mode, median • Measures of dispersion – range, inter-quartile range and standard deviation • Inferential and relational statistical techniques to include Spearman's rank correlation and Chi-square test and the application of significance tests
ICT skills	To be able to competently complete the ICT skills below: • Use of remotely sensed data (as described above in Core skills) • Use of electronic databases • Use of innovative sources of data such as crowd sourcing and 'big data' • Use of ICT to generate evidence of many of the skills provided above such as producing maps, graphs and statistical calculations

What will my lessons involve?

- Skills-based lessons involving those detailed above
- Lessons based on the fieldwork completed which will be teacher and student led enquiry lessons completing both pre fieldwork preparation and post fieldwork analysis
- Diagnostic retrieval quizzes
- Teacher led discussions of new information delivered
- Analysis and interpretation of figures to answer 6 and 9 mark questions
- Essay planning both independently and as a class
- Practice of writing parts of extended 20 mark essay questions
- Evaluation and debate of key physical and human geographical issues

What will my independent study involve?

- You should be completing at least 5 hours of independent study per week on top of any specific home learning set by your teacher. The top grades require a level of independent research and knowledge beyond the specification
- Wider reading from key theorists or Geographical texts - a minimum of one piece of wider reading per topic
- Retrieval practice e.g. brain dumps, self-quizzing
- Planning practice questions
- Writing exam style questions in timed conditions (particularly 20 markers)
- Conducting your own research into different fieldwork enquiry questions to form hypotheses completing the fieldwork processes from conception to completion

How will I be assessed?

Percentage exam assessment: 80%	Percentage coursework assessment: 20%

Assessment	Details of assessment
Paper 1	Section A: Water and carbon cycles (36 marks) Section B: Coastal systems and landscapes (36 marks) Section C: Hazards (48 marks) • Written exam: 2 hours 30 minutes • 120 marks • 40% of A level • Question types: multiple-choice, short answer, levels of response, extended prose
Paper 2	Section A: Global systems and global governance (36 marks) Section B: Changing places (36 marks) Section C: Population and the environment (48 marks) • Written exam: 2 hours 30 minutes • 120 marks • 40% of A level • Question types: multiple-choice, short answer, levels of response, extended prose
Coursework	• 3,000 – 4,000 words • 60 marks • 20% of A level • Your coursework will be initially marked by your teachers and then will be moderated by AQA

How do I know this is the right course for me?

- You enjoy wider reading and research outside of the classroom as the step up from GCSE in terms of independence is vast
- You have excellent geographical skills
- You should feel confident with extended writing and reading
- You should have a real passion for Geography

