

GCSE Geography FAQs

Are classes set or mixed ability?

All Geography classes are mixed ability groups, this is partly down to the nature of the options process but also there are no tiers in the Geography exams so all students sit the same exams at the end of the course.

Is there any coursework? How much writing is there in the exam?

The GCSE is all examined with no coursework element. There are 3 exams details of which can be found in the course information online or on the OCR website. The GCSE includes a balance of short questions which focus on knowledge recall, as well as longer more essay style questions which are focused on the analysis and evaluation of students' knowledge. The longest question students are expected to answer is worth 12 marks.

What fieldtrips do you go on?

We complete 2 fieldtrips, one a year. These trips are an integral part of the course and are a compulsory aspect of the Unit 3 exam. In Year 10 we visit Rushall Farm, near Pangbourne, to complete an investigation into changing characteristics of the River Pang. This trip usually occurs in the summer term of Year 10. In the autumn of Year 11 we normally visit either Newbury or Reading to complete an urban investigation into the impact of new developments on existing parts of the town. These trips incur a small additional cost of around £15-£20 each.

What are the mix of topics?

The GCSE covers a good mix of both human and physical geography as well as fieldwork and geographical skills. Unit 1 is focused on the geography of the UK whereas Unit 2 considers similar themes with a more global outlook. Unit 3 is where student's geographical skills and fieldwork is assessed.

What are the lessons like?

Lessons include a mix of teacher led activities as well as independent work. All students are provided with a core textbook at the start of the course, as well as folders and an assessment book. We utilise a wide range of resources throughout the course, including GIS software. All classes are taught by Geography specialist teachers.

Is it possible to do it if you didn't do Geography in Year 9?

Most definitely! Although some students find Year 9 a good basis to build on for the GCSE it is not essential students have studied Geography in Year 9 to be able to access the GCSE course. We do not pre-teach any content in Year 9, the only impact not studying Geography in Year 9 has on some students is the development of key skills but this gap is very quickly closed during Year 10.

What other subjects does it work well with?

Geography works well with a wide range of subjects including other Humanities such as History and RE as similar skills are developed. You may also find it helps your study in subjects such as Science and English.

For any questions not answered here, please feel free to email Mr Smith or Mrs Roberts csmith@stbarts.co.uk / iroberts@stbarts.co.uk