

Studying A Level Geography at Balcarras opens doors...



Have you signed up yet?

The Russell Group report published in 2011 names geography as one of the eight facilitating subjects. This is a subject most likely to be required or preferred for entry to degree courses and choosing facilitating subjects will keep more options open to you at university.

"Geography is the subject which holds the key to our future."

Michael Palin

Why study Geography?

The study of geography stimulates an interest in and a sense of wonder about places, people and the environment. It helps young people make sense of a complex and dynamically changing world. Also, how society, the economy and environment combine to bring about change. It explains where places are, how places and landscapes are formed. Additionally, how people and their environment interact, and how a diverse range of economies, societies and environments are interconnected, and examines natural resources and their sustainable use.

Key skills:

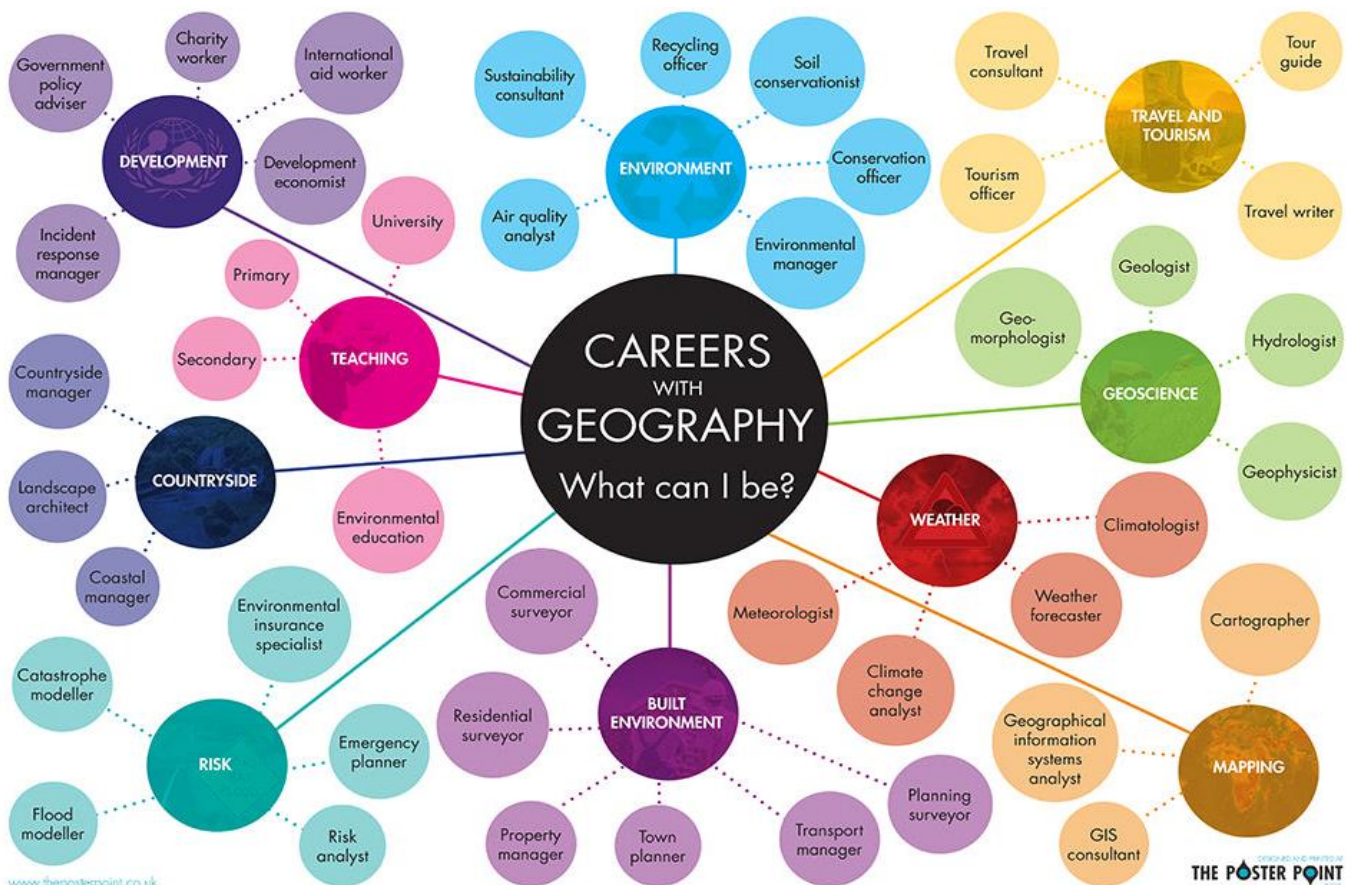
- Intellectual skills, such as critically evaluating theories and judging evidence in order to make informed decisions and to develop reasoned arguments
- Research skills, such as using a range of technical methods for the collection and analysis of spatial and environmental data, and undertaking fieldwork
- Transferable skills, such as teamwork, problem solving, IT skills, communication skills (presentation, writing, debating)

The government's decision to include geography as one of the humanities within the English Baccalaureate (EBacc), aimed at getting more students to study core subjects at GCSE.

Careers in Geography

Geography graduates become some of the most sought-after graduates by employers. They are less likely to be unemployed after their degree course than those studying other subjects.

Geographers enter a very wide range of career areas and put simply there is no such thing as a geography job, there are jobs that geographers do. Studying geography provides you with valuable skills and a firm base for life-long learning.



“Geography is a broad based academic degree which is well respected by employers. Geography graduates have one of the highest rates of graduate employment”
Royal Geographical Society

What will the A Level Geography course look like?

Course specification and entry requirements

We study the AQA A Level Geography specification. To study A Level Geography at Balcarras, pupils must achieve a **grade 6** or above in GCSE Geography.

Structure of the course

The table below shows the three elements of the course, with the road map showing the sequence of learning across the two years of study.

A-level				
Component 1	Physical Geography	2 ½ hours	96 marks	40% of A-level
Component 2	Human Geography	2 ½ hours	96 marks	40% of A-level
Component 3	Geographical investigation	3,000–4,000 words	35 marks	20% of A-level

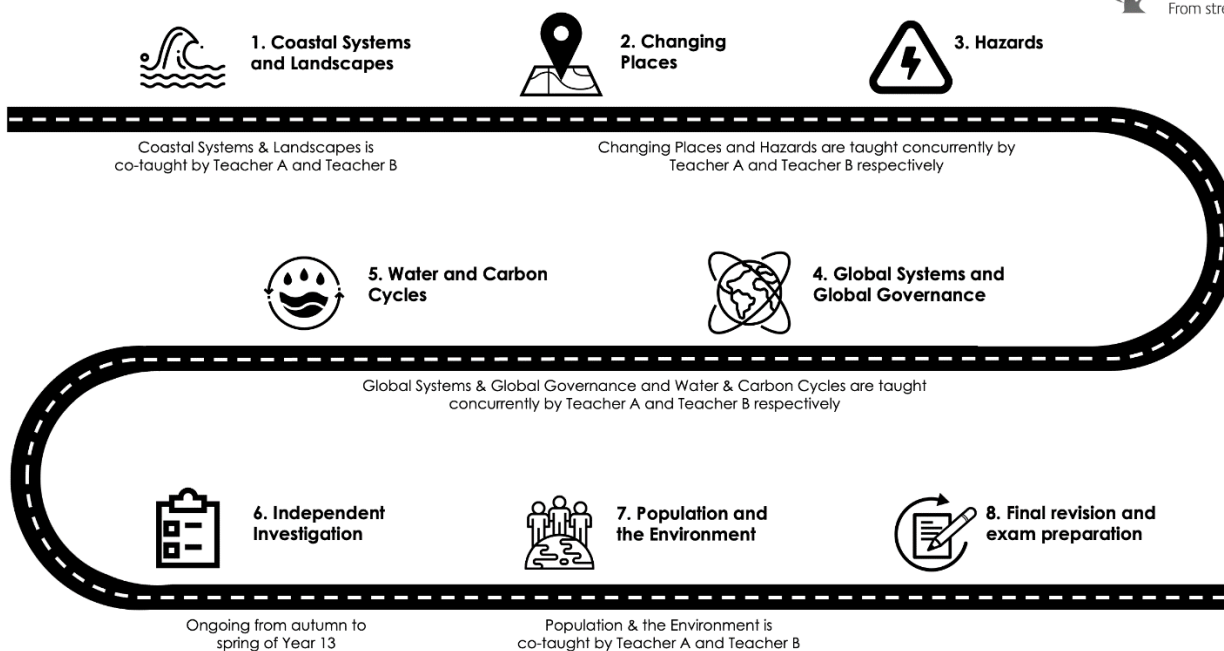
Year 12 topics:

- Coastal Landscapes
- Hazards
- Changing Places

Year 13 topics:

- Water and Carbon Cycles
- Global Systems & Global Governance
- Population & the Environment

A Road Map of the AQA A Level Geography Curriculum at Balcarras School



This road map shows the topics studied across the two years of A Level Geography. Each topic features a range of learning episodes; these are summarised in their own topic overviews and curriculum maps.

To find out more about studying the AQA A Level Geography course at Balcarras, please scan the QR code. This will take you to the Geography at Balcarras webpage where you will find the curriculum map for each topic and much more.



Please contact Miss Searle (Head of Geography) using ags@balcarras.gloucs.sch.uk if you have any questions about studying A Level Geography with us.

“Geography is highly valued by universities as an A Level choice.”

Why study geography specifically at Balcarras?

"The Geography department at Balcarras is one of the most professional yet friendly departments of the school with teachers who are very passionate about their subject and are very supportive of their students" *Maddy Maguire – Balcarras alumni and geography graduate*



Balcarras Geographers...

Develop an understanding of current **geographical events, places and issues**, from local to global

Visualise and experience **geography through fieldwork** in their local environments, as well as further afield

Achieve their **maximum potential**

Understand **their place in the world**

Are **geographically literate** citizens

Understand and contribute to a **sustainable future**

Become **curious, confident and independent thinkers**

Develop an **appreciation of the variety and interconnectedness** within the physical and human landscapes and processes

Are equipped with **transferable skills**, such as greater spatial awareness, literacy, communication, numeracy, enquiry, problem solving and computing

Appreciate the **differences between their locality and the wider world**

Become **confident, active and global members of society**

Develop the life skills and knowledge to be **responsible citizens**

Excellent exam results

Pupils in geography at Balcarras perform in the top 15% of schools and significantly and consistently score better than other schools with similar pupils.

Grade	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
A*-B	67%	68%	76%	73%	71%	83%	61%	86%
A*/A	27%	39%	44%	48%	41%	50%	44%	24%

"The study of geography is about more than just memorizing places on a map. It's about understanding the complexity of our world, appreciating the diversity of cultures that exists across continents. And in the end, it's about using all that knowledge to help bridge divides and bring people together." *Barak Obama*

The Department

The geography department is made up of a team of 5 experienced, enthusiastic and committed teachers with Miss Searle as Head of Department. In addition to their primary role as geography teacher, Mrs Bull is DofE Manager and Careers Leader, Mrs Cullis is Assistant Headteacher, Miss Niblett is Head of Selvey House and Mr Pearce is Website Coordinator.

Geography is primarily taught in 4 specialist classrooms. All classrooms have interactive whiteboards. We also have a range of high quality departmental resources such as class iPads, specialist GIS software, modern texts and a set of 20 computers for pupil use.

Cohort sizes

We currently have around 80 students studying A level geography (AQA). A level Geography is also a popular option amongst external candidates and the department do everything to ensure all pupils have a smooth transition from Year 11 in to Year 12. This includes our residential to Dorset which occurs each October.

Fieldwork

Fieldwork is a fundamental aspect of geography which we are fully committed to delivering. The pupils have access to fieldwork opportunities throughout their A-level studies.

Pupils must undertake four compulsory days of geographical field work which covers both human and physical geography. This will involve a residential trip to Dorset and a day trip in Cheltenham, Pupils will then use the skills learnt to collect and collate data which will form part of their independent investigation worth 20% of the full A-level.

In addition, every two years we run an optional foreign residential trip for A Level Geography pupils. We have been to Iceland, the West Coast of America and Italy in recent years.

Our next international fieldtrip is scheduled to be to Iceland in October 2025.



**"Geography is an earthly subject,
but a heavenly science."
Edmund Burke**



**"Without geography you're nowhere."
Jimmy Buffett**