



Human geography in the National Curriculum, GCSE and A level examination specifications (in 2016)

Geography National Curriculum

Understand geographical similarities, differences and links between places through the study of human and physical geography of a region within Africa, and of a region within Asia.

Understand through the use of detailed place-based exemplars at a variety of scales, the key processes in human geography relating to:

- population and urbanisation
- international development
- economic activity in the primary, secondary, tertiary and quaternary sectors
- the use of natural resources.

Understand how human and physical processes interact to influence, and change landscapes, environments and the climate; and how human activity relies on effective functioning of natural systems.

GCSE subject content

A requirement that all students study the geography of the UK in depth.

Human geography: processes and change

- Cities and urban society – an overview of the causes and effects of rapid urbanisation and contrasting urban trends in different parts of the world with varying characteristics of economic and social development. At least two city studies, one economically advanced/one poor and understanding of the causes and impacts of national and international migration on the growth and character of these cities.
- Global economic development issues – the causes and consequences of uneven development at global level as the background for considering the changing context of population, economy and society and of technological and political development ‘in at least one poorer country or one that is within a newly emerging economy. Country study should include examination of the wider political, social and environmental context within which the country is placed, the changing nature of industry and investment, and the characteristics of international trade, aid and geo-political relationships with respect to that country’.

GCE A level subject content

Two core themes related to human geography:

- global systems and global governance
- changing place; changing places

Global systems and global governance

Greater connectivity between people, places and environments across the globe means that movements of goods, people, technology and ideas have become easier and the systems which facilitate and direct these flows have become truly global in reach and impact. AS and A level specifications must require students to undertake study of the way in which global systems shape relationships between individuals, states and environments. They must also investigate the increasing numbers of norms, laws and conventions, referred to here as 'global governance', that aim to regulate the consequences of globalisation for people, places and environments around the world.

- Study must focus equally on two sub-themes and use both quantitative and qualitative approaches across the theme as a whole:
 - (a)** one from the following list allowing investigation of the operation of global systems:
 - (i) international trade and access to markets in the contemporary world
 - (ii) patterns of human development and life expectancy (for example, as understood through the human development index)
 - (iii) processes and patterns of global population migration
 - (b)** one from the following list illustrating the impacts of global governance:
 - (i) governance of the global commons (selecting either Antarctica or the Earth's atmosphere or the oceans)
 - (ii) human rights and the geopolitics of intervention
 - (iii) sovereignty and territorial integrity
- Students to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the key areas of content listed below, and through this knowledge to gain understanding of the way in which global systems and global governance underlie their own and other people's lives across the globe.

Global systems

- The nature of economic, political, social and environmental interdependence in the contemporary world
- How unequal flows of people, money, ideas and technology within global systems can sometimes act to promote stability, growth and development but can also cause inequalities, conflicts and injustices for people and places
- How unequal power relations enable some states to drive global systems to their own advantage and to directly influence geopolitical events, while others are only able to respond or resist in a more constrained way

Global governance

- The role of norms, laws and institutions in regulating and reproducing global systems, and analysis of the geographical consequences for citizens and places
- How attempts at global governance (including the example of the United Nations in the post-1945 era) can work to promote growth and stability but may also exacerbate inequalities and injustices
- How interactions between the local, regional, national, international and global scales are fundamental to an understanding of global governance

Changing place; changing places

Relationships and connections between people, the economy, society and the environment help to explain why places are constantly changing. In addition, the meanings and representations attached to places help to shape actions and behaviours affecting that place. A level specifications, and AS specifications which address this theme, must require that students undertake study of the way in which these factors (relationships, connections, meaning, representation) affect continuity and change in the nature of places and our understanding of place.

Study must develop the required knowledge and understanding:

- by starting study from the local place within which students live or study and at least one further contrasting place through which to develop the required knowledge and understanding. Study must involve moving out from the local place to encompass regional, national, international and global scales in order to understand the dynamics of place. (Note that a local place may be a locality, neighbourhood or small community, either urban or rural.)
- focusing equally on two sub-themes:
 - (a) one from the list below, which will allow investigation of the impact of relationships and connections on people and place:
 - (i) changing demographic and cultural characteristics
 - (ii) economic change and social inequalities
 - (iii) food production, circulation and consumption
 - (b) one from the list below, which will allow investigation of the importance of the meanings and representations attached to places by people:
 - (i) place making and marketing as revealed and contrasted in the work of a range of formal and informal agencies in their materials
 - (ii) cultural and artistic approaches to representing place
 - (iii) lived experience of place (i.e. how people see, experience and understand places) in the past and present)
- give particular weight to qualitative approaches involved in representing place, and to analysing critically the impacts of different media on place meanings and perceptions. The use of quantitative data, including the use of geospatial data must also be used to present place characteristics.

Students to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the key areas of content listed below, and through this knowledge to gain understanding of the way in which their own lives and those of others are affected by continuity and change in the nature of places.

Relationships and connections

- How the demographic, socio-economic and cultural characteristics of places are shaped by shifting flows of people, resources, money and investment, and ideas at all scales from local to global
- How past and present connections, within and beyond localities, shape places and embed them in the regional, national, international and global scales
- The characteristics and impacts of external forces operating at different scales from local to global, including at least one of (i) government policies, (ii) the decisions of multinational corporations, or (iii) the impacts of international or global institutions

Meaning and representations

- How humans perceive, engage with and form attachments to places and how they present and represent the world to others, including the way in which everyday place meanings are bound up with different identities, perspectives and experiences
- How external agencies, including (but not limited to) governments, corporate bodies and community or local groups make attempts to influence or create specific place-meanings and thereby shape the actions and behaviours of individuals, groups, businesses and institutions
- That places may be represented in a variety of different forms⁴ and use different media⁵ that often give contrasting images to that presented more formally or statistically⁶
- That both past and present processes of development can be seen to influence the social and economic characteristics of places and so be implicit in present meanings

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