

# Geography A-Level

## Bridging the Gap Year 11 – Year 12

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Hoping to study Geography at A Level? Or maybe you are simply interested in taking some time to further your understanding of the geography you have studied at GCSE?

**There are number of things you can do:**

1. **Developing as a geographer** – through general reading around / watching videos / listening to podcasts etc. to develop your geographical knowledge and understanding
2. **Preparing for the A Level Course** Starting to explore the topics and their foundations which will be studied in the A Level course.

To be a great geographer you need to develop the ability to think synoptically, being able to see the greater overview and how everything begins to link together. Geography is not just about studying people and landscapes; it is also the relationships that exist between people and their environment.

At GCSE you have covered a lot of the foundations of the underpinning concepts; physical processes and how they have shaped the landscape and the key human processes that shape our society. GCSE has provided a breadth of study, whereas A Level will now enable you to gain greater depth by exploring topics in greater detail but also encouraging you to see and explore the links between topics.

The best geographers at A Level keep reading the news and generally seek to improve their geographical understanding by engaging with geographical discussions regarding key issues.

This guide has been designed for you to be able to dip in and out of, from looking at general geographical issues and developing your ability to think like a geographer, through to starting to explore some of the topics we will be looking at in Year 12 and 13 so you can do some valuable background reading.

### DEVELOPING AS A GEOGRAPHER

The below includes, websites, books, podcasts, documentaries and even films which provide a great way of staying inspired and engaging with geography.

#### *i. ONLINE NEWS ARTICLES*

THE CONVERSATION.COM <http://theconversation.com/uk> we can highly recommend you use this! This you will find is really useful to support many of your A Levels. It provides up to date articles from academics and specialists in the field written in a way that is accessible to all, summarising key points in short but insightful articles.

BBC NEWS <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news> - an excellent source of up to date articles – explore the key headings such as Science, as well as the UK, World and other stories.

THE GUARDIAN <https://www.theguardian.com/uk> - again many useful articles and logically ordered – keep an eye on the Environment, Science, Society, Global Development stories in particular!

GEOGRAPHICAL <https://exacteditions.com/login> Established in 1935, Geographical is the official magazine of the Royal Geographical Society and one of the leading magazines in its field with stunning photography, great writing and first-class design. Keep up to date with the world, its people and places through the fascinating articles. As a Geography student, you have exclusive, unlimited access to the online archive which dates back to 1935. Access it by following the link above, select library card and then enter with your school code (577109).

## *ii. PODCASTS*

Now is the time to broaden your geographical understanding! Stick your headphones in and listen to some of the following...

Costing the Earth – There are some great podcasts here to pick from on a wide variety of geographical issues <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006r4wn/episodes/player> (many topics, including amongst others.. climate change, carbon, urban greening, deforestation, alternative power, plastics etc.)

Royal Geographical Society – “Ask the Geographer podcasts” - <https://www.rgs.org/schools/teaching-resources/ask-the-expert-podcasts/> - a fantastic set of podcasts to keep A Level studies up-to-date with the latest geographical research – pick out some that interest you and give them a go!

Oxford University School of Geography and the Environment – <https://podcasts.ox.ac.uk/series/school-geography-and-environment-podcasts> *These online audio resources consist of lectures, seminars and interviews from the School of Geography and the Environment at the University of Oxford.*

Talks from the Royal Geographical Society [https://www.rgs.org/all/?categories=FreeToView&utm\\_source=Twitter&utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_campaign=SocialSignIn](https://www.rgs.org/all/?categories=FreeToView&utm_source=Twitter&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=SocialSignIn) *From microplastics to microfinance, the RGS have released over 50 free geographical talks for you to watch and listen to.*

## *iii. ONLINE NEWS ARTICLES*

Remember you can make use of the local libraries digital library service for books – you don't have to access hard copies.

Prisoners of Geography (Marshall, T) – an insightful book which helps understand how physical geography impacts on political reality and really helps to understand how decisions of world leaders have been shaped by geography – a great introduction to geopolitics.

Factfulness: Ten reasons we're wrong about the world – and why things are better than you think (Rosling, H 2019) – this is a must-read book from a geography perspective – this takes a more realistic view of the world, presenting issues in fact-based context. It is a rational look at actually how far the world has measurably improved and what's left to be done.

Adventures in the Anthropocene (Vince, G) (2016) – this looks at the effects that humans are having on the surface and structure of the planet with a balanced view on recognising threats and dangers whilst also look for practical answers and solutions.

Divided (Tim Marshall) - Author Tim Marshall attempts to explain why we are living in an age of walls by delving into our past and present to reveal the fault lines that will shape our world for years to come. Another Sunday Times Best Seller from the author.

Unruly Places (Alistair Bonnet) - At a time when Google Maps can take you on a virtual tour of most places on the planet, it's hard to imagine there's any uncharted ground left on the planet. Unruly Places goes to some of the most unexpected, offbeat places in the world to re-inspire our geographical imaginations.

Brick Lane (Monica Ali) - A fictional novel which explores the rich cultural heritage of East London's Brick Lane. A less academic approach to key urban issues and cultural tensions in inner-city London.

China's Asian Dream (Tom Miller) - Combining a concise overview of the situation with on-the-ground reportage from over seven countries, China's Asian Dream offers a fresh perspective on one of the most important questions of our time: what does China's rise mean for the future of Asia and of the world?

On the Map (Simon Garfield) - Maps fascinate us. They chart our understanding of the world and they log our progress, but above all they tell our stories. From the early sketches of philosophers and explorers through to Google Maps and beyond, Simon Garfield examines how maps both relate and realign our history.

The Power of Place (Harm De Blij) - The world is not as mobile or as interconnected as we like to think. As Harm de Blij argues in The Power of Place, in crucial ways--from the uneven distribution of natural resources to the unequal availability of opportunity--geography continues to hold billions of people in its grip. Incorporating a series of persuasive maps, De Blij describes the tremendously varied environments across the planet and shows how migrations between them are comparatively rare. De Blij also looks at the ways we are redefining place so as to make its power even more potent than it has been, with troubling implications.

The Revenge of Geography (Robert D Kaplan)- NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER In this provocative, startling book, Robert D. Kaplan, the bestselling author of Monsoon and Balkan

Ghosts, offers a revelatory new prism through which to view global upheavals and to understand what lies ahead for continents and countries around the world.

Landmarks (Robert Macfarlane)- Words are grained into our landscapes, and landscapes are grained into our words. Landmarks is about the power of language to shape our sense of place. It is a field guide to the literature of nature and a glossary containing thousands of remarkable words used in England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales to describe land, nature, and weather.

Mountains of the Mind (Robert Macfarlane) - Combining accounts of legendary mountain ascents with vivid descriptions of his own forays into wild, high landscapes, Robert MacFarlane reveals how the mystery of the world's highest places has come to grip the Western imagination—and perennially draws legions of adventurers up the most perilous slopes.

Notes from a Small Island (Bill Bryson) - Featuring an all-new cover, New York Times bestseller Bill Bryson's hilarious journey through the beloved island nation he called home for two decades. From Downing Street to Loch Ness, this is a delightful look at the United Kingdom.

A History of the World in 12 Maps (Jeremy Brotton) - Jerry Brotton examines the significance of 12 maps - from the almost mystical representations of ancient history to the satellite-derived imagery of today. He vividly recreates the environments and circumstances in which each of the maps was made, showing how each conveys a highly individual view of the world. Brotton shows how each of his maps both influenced and reflected contemporary events and how, by considering it in all its nuances and omissions, we can better understand the world that produced it.

The Phantom Atlas (Edward Brooke-Hitching) - The Phantom Atlas is a guide to the world not as it is, but as it was imagined to be. It's a world of ghost islands, invisible mountain ranges, mythical civilizations, ship-wrecking beasts, and other fictitious features introduced on maps and atlases through mistakes, misunderstanding, fantasies, and outright lies.

Longitude (Dava Sobel) - Longitude is the dramatic human story of an epic scientific quest and of Harrison's forty-year obsession with building his perfect timekeeper, known today as the chronometer. Full of heroism and chicanery, it is also a fascinating brief history of astronomy, navigation, and clockmaking, and opens a new window on our world.

The Happy City (Charles Montgomery) - Charles Montgomery's Happy City is revolutionizing the way we think about urban life. After decades of unchecked sprawl, more people than ever are moving back to the city. Dense urban living has been prescribed as a panacea for the environmental and resource crises of our time. But is it better or worse for our happiness? Are subways, sidewalks, and condo towers an improvement on the car dependence of the suburbs?

Map head: Charting the Weird World of Geography Wonks (Ken Jennings) - Ken Jennings takes readers on a world tour of geogeeks from the London Map Fair to the bowels of the Library of Congress, from the prepubescent geniuses at the National Geographic Bee to the

computer programmers at Google Earth. Each chapter delves into a different aspect of map culture: highpointing, geocaching, road atlas rallying, even the “unreal estate” charted on the maps of fiction and fantasy. Jennings also considers the ways in which cartography has shaped our history, suggesting that the impulse to make and read maps is as relevant today as it has ever been.

Atlas of Improbable Places (Travis Elborough) - With beautiful maps and stunning photography illustrating each destination, Atlas of Improbable Places is a fascinating voyage to the world's most incredible destinations. As the Island of Dolls and the hauntingly titled Door to Hell — an inextinguishable fire pit - attest, mystery is never far away. The truths and myths behind their creation are as varied as the destinations themselves. Standing as symbols of worship, testaments to kingships or even the strange and wonderful traditions of old and new, these curious places are not just extraordinary sights but reflections on man's own relationship with the world around us.

#### *iv. GEOGRAPHICAL DOCUMENTARIES*

There are some great geographical documentaries which will help develop your general geographical knowledge and understanding and help you see what an amazing world we live in.

The following are all available on iPlayer.

- David Attenborough Box Sets – there are 9 amazing boxsets available on iplayer from David Attenborough exploring our amazing world <https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/group/p06m42d9>
- The Americas with Simon Reeve <https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episodes/m00095p0/theamericas-with-simon-reeve>
- Simon Reeve around the world <https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/group/p06rrnkm>
- Mediterranean with Simon Reeve <https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episodes/b0bnb6tt/mediterranean-with-simon-reeve>

The following are all available on ITV Hub

- Britain Underwater: Fighting the Floods <https://www.itv.com/hub/britain-underwater-fightingthe-floods/7a0157>
- Joanna Lumley's Hidden Caribbean: Havana to Haiti <https://www.itv.com/hub/joanna-lumleyshidden-caribbean-havana-to-haiti/2a7578>

The following are all available on Channel 4 – On Demand

- When the Immigrants Leave (Dispatches) <https://www.channel4.com/programmes/dispatches/on-demand/69555-001>

- China's Lonely Hearts (Unreported World)  
<https://www.channel4.com/programmes/unreported-world/on-demand/56011-011>
- The world's dirtiest river (Unreported world)  
<https://www.channel4.com/programmes/unreported-world/on-demand/58399-001>
- Forests of Fear (Unreported World) -  
<https://www.channel4.com/programmes/unreportedworld/on-demand/69224-006>
- Hurricane Hell (Unreported World)  
<https://www.channel4.com/programmes/unreportedworld/on-demand/69224-007>
- The World's Dirtiest Air (Unreported World)  
<https://www.channel4.com/programmes/unreported-world/on-demand/67193-002>
- The week Britain Froze (Dispatches)  
<https://www.channel4.com/programmes/dispatches/on-demand/66548-007>

#### *v. GEOGRAPHICAL FILMS*

(some are available online free – others may be available on providers such as Amazon Prime / Netflix etc.)

- Touching the Void (15) (great for visualising glacial landscapes) – a powerful true story docudrama (strong language in parts)
- Before the Flood (2016) (PG) – National Geographic  
<https://www.filmsforaction.org/watch/before-the-flood-2016/> (presented by Leonardo DiCaprio – exploring climate change and looking at what needs to be done today to prevent catastrophic disruption of life on our planet.
- The Impossible (2012) (12) – Movie based on real life events of the 2004 Boxing Day tsunami which killed 200,000 people.
- Slumdog Millionaire (15) – based on life in the slums of Mumbai
- Our Planet (Netflix series) – explores how climate change impacts all living creatures.
- Mandela: Long Walk to Freedom (12) – an epic which celebrates the journey of Nelson Mandela from childhood in a rural village through to his election as President of South Africa. This explores what happened in South Africa with regards to apartheid and Black opposition through the eyes of Nelson Mandela.
- Hotel Rwanda (12) - the true story of hotel manager who houses and protects Tutsi refugees – this is a hard-hitting film based on the Rwandan Conflict of the 1990s.
- The Last King of Scotland (15) – another hard-hitting story, based on struggles faced by Uganda under the dictatorship of Idi Amin.

- Into the Wild (2007) (15) – based on the story of a university graduate who gives up all of his material possessions and journeys alone into the Alaskan Wilderness

## PREPARING FOR A LEVEL GEOGRAPHY AT CLYST VALE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

At Clyst Vale Community College we follow the AQA A Level. You will have two examined units and one NEA (Non-Examined Assessment) i.e. an independent geographical investigation.

We have put the following together for you for you to start doing some reading round the topics we will be covering across the two years. For each topic, we have given a brief overview and then some starting points, with examples of reading and video links for you to follow up.

If you want to know where to start, in the September of Year 12 we start with Glaciation and Changing Places.

If you have any questions whilst exploring the following please do not hesitate to contact us.

### Component 1: Physical Geography

At Clyst Vale, we cover the following topics for Component 1.

#### *Glaciation.*

In this unit you will explore how earth surface processes, shape glacial landscapes with the aid of transfers of energy and movements of material. The unit explores inter-relationships in the glacial system, how they change over time and issues associated in managing them.

Starting points...

Video: Power of the Planet (Ice) <https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x5aj54i> - a GREAT introduction to the work we will be doing on glaciation in year 12.

Reading: All about Glaciers <https://nsidc.org/cryosphere/glaciers> - this is a fantastic website for starting to get to grips with glaciation and their impact on the landscapes and provides the foundation for many of the key ideas we will study at A Level.

#### *Hazards*

At Clyst Vale, we also look at Hazards as part of Component 1 Physical Geography. We explore how our understanding has evolved with regards to the seismic and volcanic activity that we experience through the movement of the earth's tectonic plates. We look at how these tectonic processes have shaped our world and created new landforms, helping to support life on earth. We also explore the potential impact of the hazards associated with earthquakes and volcanoes and how as technology has developed we have improved our

ability to predict and mitigate, whilst considering reasons for the variation in risks associated with hazards both spatially and over time. We will be looking at the concepts of risk and resilience and how these can be managed at various levels and to various degrees of success.

Starting points...

Video: Power of the Planet (Volcanoes) <https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x5af4kg> - a great introduction to the work we will be doing on volcanoes.

Reading: Plate Tectonics (The Geological Society) – this will be a good step up from your GCSE work to A Level and is definitely worth reading / working through

<https://www.geolsoc.org.uk/PlateTectonics>

USGS Natural Hazards – FAQ <https://www.usgs.gov/faq/natural-hazards> – some excellent reading here in bitesize chunks – well worth exploring

### *Water and the Carbon Cycle*

Water and carbon are fundamental to supporting life on earth and are hence regarded as 'earth's life support systems. Water and carbon are cycled in both open and closed systems between the land, oceans and the atmosphere. The processes in the water and carbon cycles are inter-related. Human activity is increasingly threatening and altering water and carbon cycles for example through deforestation, ocean acidification, desertification etc. It is important that we look at global and national solutions to protect these.

Reading: Water and Carbon Cycling (Royal Geographical Society) – this is an excellent starting point / content overview for the water and carbon work that we will be looking at

<https://www.rgs.org/CMSPages/GetFile.aspx?nodeguid=6dc9f1c1-f92d-4c04-9f85-9985844a6a79&lang=en-GB>

Reading: Introduction to the Carbon Cycle

<https://www.khanacademy.org/science/biology/ecology/biogeochemical-cycles/a/the-carbon-cycle>

Reading: Introduction to the Water Cycle

<https://www.khanacademy.org/science/biology/ecology/biogeochemical-cycles/a/the-water-cycle>

### Component 2 Human Geography

At Clyst Vale, we follow the AQA A Level specification and we cover the following topics.

#### *Changing Places*

This unit explores the relationships and connections between people, the economy and society and their contributing to placemaking (i.e. creating places). The unit explores the



meanings and representations attached to places and how place making takes place at a variety of scales. It explores places from a local to global level.

Starting points...

Interactive: Changing Spaces, Making Places – a good story map introduction – work your way through

<https://focusschoolwilton.maps.arcgis.com/apps/Cascade/index.html?appid=f10c512164d0498d8f3bcfad8ae61d39>

Reading: Changing Spaces– a good starting point read

<https://pmt.physicsandmathstutor.com/download/Geography/A-level/Notes/OCR/ChangingSpaces-Making-Places/Set-A/Notes%20on%20Changing%20Places,%20Making%20Places%20-%20OCR%20Geography%20A-level.pdf>

### *Global Systems and Governance*

The focus of the global connection's topics is exploring global processes and flows and their impact on people places and institutions. This will help you start to understand how the world around you is shaped, its complexities and the issues that arise. It is broken up into (i) Global Systems and (ii) Global Governance. We will cover one of the optional topics under each heading.

Global Systems: Global Migration

At Clyst Vale you will explore contemporary patterns of migration and understand why it has become increasingly complex. You will also be exploring the issues associated with unequal flows of global migration.

Starting points...

Reading: Introduction to Migration short notes)

<https://www.tutor2u.net/geography/reference/introduction-to-migration>

Reading: Global Migration – a good starting point read

<https://pmt.physicsandmathstutor.com/download/Geography/A-level/Notes/OCR/GlobalMigration/Set-A/Notes%20on%20Global%20Migration%20-%20Geography%20A-level.pdf>

Video: Escape to Europe: The migrant's story – BBC Newsnight

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yZqdUBpHmhM>

Video: The truth about immigration in the UK 2014

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MHpIEJgevqM>

Video: Immigration: Is Britain Getting Full? <https://www.channel4.com/programmes/jon-snowexplains/on-demand/61877-004>

Video: Between Borders – America’s migrant crisis

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rxF0tSMEXA>

Video: Fleeing Climate Change – The real environmental disaster (forced migration due to climate change) [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cl4Uv9\\_7KJE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cl4Uv9_7KJE)

You will explore what is meant by human rights and how women’s rights vary through exploration of the complexity of gender inequality. The course will also explore the global governance of human rights and the extent to which intervention in human rights is contributing to development.

Starting points...

Reading: Human Rights - a good starting point read

<https://pmt.physicsandmathstutor.com/download/Geography/A-level/Notes/OCR/HumanRights/Set-A/Notes%20on%20Human%20Rights%20-%20OCR%20Geography%20A-level.pdf>

Video: World’s worst place to be a woman? (Stacey Dooley Investigates)

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/b06mvwhb/stacey-dooley-investigates-worlds-worst-placeto-be-a-woman>

Video: Why climate change is a threat to Human Rights (TED Talk)

[https://www.ted.com/talks/mary\\_robinson\\_why\\_climate\\_change\\_is\\_a\\_threat\\_to\\_human\\_rights](https://www.ted.com/talks/mary_robinson_why_climate_change_is_a_threat_to_human_rights)

Video: What if a single human right could change the world? (TED TALK)

[https://www.ted.com/talks/kristen\\_wenz\\_what\\_if\\_a\\_single\\_human\\_right\\_could\\_change\\_the\\_world](https://www.ted.com/talks/kristen_wenz_what_if_a_single_human_right_could_change_the_world)

### *Population and the Environment*

At Clyst Vale we also look at Population and the Environment which explores issues around food and resources, population and sustainable futures.

There are a number of key concepts which underpin the topics, including inequality, mitigation and adaptation, sustainability, risk, resilience and threshold.

Starting points...

Video: Climate Change the Facts – David Attenborough

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/m00049b1/climate-change-the-facts> Video:

Panorama – Climate Change: What can we do?

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/m0009drg/panorama-climate-change-what-can-we-do>

Video: The Disarming case to act right now climate change – Greta Thunberg (TED TALK)

[https://www.ted.com/talks/greta\\_thunberg\\_the\\_disarming\\_case\\_to\\_act\\_right\\_now\\_on\\_climate\\_change](https://www.ted.com/talks/greta_thunberg_the_disarming_case_to_act_right_now_on_climate_change)

Reading: Climate Change – The Guardian have an excellent section on Climate Change which is frequently updated with articles and is well worth dipping into  
<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/climate-change>

Reading: Climate Change – The Conversation – a wealth of articles – frequently updated – highly recommended! <https://theconversation.com/uk/topics/climate-change-27>

Look forward to meeting you all in September.

Mr Kerrigan  
(Head of Geography)  
kerrigang@clystvale.org