

Geography



Key Stage 3 (years 7-8)

All Geography units reflect the ethos of challenge, pace, relevance and celebration. We have ensured that all the topics are linked to the contemporary world, so that students can understand WHY they are learning about these topics. We have therefore selected issues that move beyond the traditional topic titles, hence the ‘China in the 21st century’ unit and the ‘biome destruction’ unit that challenges media-fuelled stereotypes of plastic being the biggest environmental issue. Each year students study human, physical and themed Geography units.

	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4	Term 5	Term 6
Year 7	Atlases and Maps	Natural Hazards	Trade and Development	Rainforests and Biome destruction	Population	Coasts
Year 8	Glaciation	China	Tourism	Weather	Division and Conflict	Africa

Geography



Key Stage 4 (years 9-11)

The OCR specification is phrased in a series of detailed enquiry questions. These enquiry questions are an appropriate way to engage students and help the teacher to promote the relevance of the topic under study. Unit 3 (a decision-making exam) for example allows students to do more than regurgitate facts as they must analyse, interpret and create solutions to real world issues, proving that they can think synoptically to understand and investigate geographically - this provides the higher-level thinking skills that Geographers require.

Key Stage 5 (years 12-13)

The A level was selected to be OCR as it followed on from the GCSE approach. It also has the most challenge and relevance to the lives of the students in Portishead. We selected this course as it contained a mix of 'old favourites' such as coasts and tectonics, but also newer and vibrant topics such as human rights and global migration too. The students are also required to think as Geographer to succeed in this specification. This has provided staff with the chance to train students to think as well as learn. We have afforded a lot of time to looking at issues that move beyond the course content to help fine hone interpretation and analytical skills. The exam board were keen that the specification trains Geographers for the future and we could not agree more that it does this (instead of teaching students' bits about the world). Students also have a lot of flexibility in this course - there is the chance to pursue a self-selected and designed NEA project that is completed from start to finish by the students - this provides both challenge and pride. In the geographical debate's unit, students select an issue that as a class we learn. The advantage of a different unit each year means that staff have the overview of the full specification and students have picked an engaging and relevant topic to investigate.