**GEOGRAPHY**

**GCSE Geography**

**Why study Geography?**

The unique feature of Geography is the breadth of skills it develops, which stands students in good stead whatever future path they choose. Furthermore, its contemporary relevance is unparalleled, particularly in light of the new specifications which were ready teaching from September 2016 and, for the first time, integrate human and physical Geography in a style most appropriate for the 21st Century. GCSE Geography is thus a crucial step in students’ journeys to becoming engaged global citizens.

**Course description**

The Edexcel B GCSE Geography specification adopts an investigative approach, and the content is framed by enquiry questions which encourage the integration of geographical skills throughout the course. The core content is enhanced by fieldwork experience and progression throughout the course prepares students for a decision-making exercise where they are expected to weigh up various options and justify decisions surrounding a key geographical issue.

The content includes traditional topics such as hazards, coasts and energy – often with a contemporary twist such as the inclusion of extreme weather alongside tectonic hazards – as well as more 21st-century issues such as rapid urbanisation, inequality and globalisation.

Geographical and fieldwork skills are integrated throughout and GCSE Geographers enjoy 3 days’ fieldwork spread throughout the course. The assessment of fieldwork skills is integrated into paper 2 so there is no coursework or controlled assessment component to this course.

**Requirements**

There are no particular academic requirements and it combines well with almost every other subject, perhaps best complementing subjects such as History, P&R and Biology. The syllabus is a considerable size in terms of volume so self-discipline to keep on top of the material and motivation are vital to success. A genuine interest in the subject matter – i.e. a keenness to read widely, be aware of contemporary, topical issues in the news and to pursue areas of interest in a bit more depth – is a characteristic of the most successful Geographers.

**Assessment structure**

- Paper 1: Global Geographical Issues (1 hour 30 mins exam) – 37.5%
- Paper 2: UK Geographical Issues (1 hour 30 mins exam) – 37.5%

Please note: there is no coursework for GCSE Geography

**Contact for further information**

Miss Rachel Trafford, Head of Geography (rrt@wellingtoncollege.org.uk)

**Link to the Edexcel B specification**

A Level Geography

Course description

Geography challenges opinions, broadens the mind and sharpens key skills. Few subjects can boast the same breadth and contemporary relevance. A-level Geography is thus another step in the exciting journey to becoming an engaged global citizen. All students – in conjunction with IB Geographers - enjoy a 4-day residential field trip designed to develop their practical and enquiry skills through fieldwork in preparation for the Individual Investigation (see below), as well as deepen their understanding of concepts they have studied by observing and experiencing them in reality.

Over the course of two years, A-Level Geographers following the OCR syllabus will study a range of exciting topics which help them to understand the world through investigation of physical and human processes and systems, as well as the way those two “spheres” interact. The content for papers 1 and 2 includes the study of vital systems such as the water and carbon cycles, landscapes (which students won’t have studied before: we try to avoid repetition) such as drylands and cold environments, a chance to explore the ways in which humans shape the places and spaces they live in at a variety of scales, and investigation of global systems and governance issues such as migration, geopolitics, trade and human rights. The geographical debates paper provides a fantastic opportunity to unpick some of the most contemporary challenges facing the world today such as climate change, oceans, food, health and hazards.

Geographical and fieldwork skills are integrated throughout the course and the Individual Investigation provides scope for pupils to choose an area of study which is of particular interest to them, subject to logistical possibilities.

Requirements

Motivation, self-discipline and a willingness to read widely are vital to success. The ability to work independently and a desire to pursue areas of interest in depth are characteristics of successful Geographers.

Most students achieve an A* or a 7 at MYP before starting, but an A grade or a 6 at MYP with a strong understanding of basic geographical concepts and a genuine interest in the subject would be a minimum threshold. On the odd occasion we might consider taking a student who has not studied Geography in the 4th and 5th form.

Geographers typically study a wide variety of other subjects: it can fit a Biology / Chemistry / Maths combination for a prospective Medic or scientist; equally, it can be combined with subjects such as Languages and English for a slightly different – but equally suitable - package. The unique feature of Geography is the breadth of skills it develops, and hence it can complement a wide range of subjects, probably fitting most closely with other humanities subjects such as Economics, Politics, RS and History.

Assessment structure

- Paper 1: Physical systems (1 hour 45 minutes exam) – 24%
- Paper 2: Human interactions (1 hour 45 minutes exam) – 24%
- Paper 3: Geographical debates (2 hours 30 minutes exam) – 32%
- Individual Investigation (coursework) – 20%

Potential careers

Geography is a highly-valued A Level and studying Geography at university can unlock a wide variety of careers which is virtually unparalleled in its breadth. Geographers are always in demand as a consequence of the skills they have acquired and The Guardian (13th August 2015) recently billed it as the “must-have A level” for the following reasons: “Geography is a subject for our times. It is inherently multidisciplinary in a world that increasingly values people who have the skills needed to work across the physical and social sciences… all these are not just intrinsically interesting and valuable. They also encourage ways of seeing and thinking that make geographers eminently employable, which is why, according to the latest information from the Higher Education Careers Services Unit, only 5.8% of geography
graduates were still job-hunting six months after they graduated, against an average of 7.3%”. So, beyond explicitly academic careers, be it management consultancy or investment banking; law or urban planning; geologist or politician; meteorologist or journalist; the world is your oyster if you are a Geographer!

Contact for further information
Miss Rachel Trafford, Head of Geography (rrt@wellingtoncollege.org.uk)

Link to the OCR specification
IB Geography (HL and SL)

Course description

Geography challenges opinions, broadens the mind and sharpens key skills. Few subjects can boast the same breadth and contemporary relevance. IB Geography is thus another step in the exciting journey to becoming an engaged global citizen. All students — in conjunction with A Level Geographers — enjoy a 4-day residential field trip designed to develop their practical and enquiry skills through fieldwork in preparation for the Internal Assessment, as well as deepen their understanding of concepts they have studied by observing and experiencing them in reality.

IB Geography is designed to provide pupils with a broad and comprehensive understanding of the interactions between individuals, societies and the physical environment. Pupils will investigate these interactions at a variety of temporal and spatial scales, as well as develop an appreciation for the diversity of perspectives, attitudes and beliefs that govern human behaviour. The course covers an exciting range of key contemporary geographical issues and challenges (such as inequality, sustainability, climate change and — particularly at HL - globalisation) and enables pupils to develop a knowledgeable and balanced international outlook. We aim to avoid repetition of topics they will have studied before (where possible), and the syllabus is of an inherently topical nature which provides a challenging and varied course at both Higher and Standard level. The Higher Level course is distinguished from the Standard Level course primarily by the addition of the "Global Interactions" paper which involves an in-depth study of globalisation and its variety of economic, social, environmental and political manifestations; as well as a third option choice in Paper 2 (see below).

Requirements

Motivation, self-discipline and a willingness to read widely are vital to success. The ability to work independently and a desire to pursue areas of interest in depth are characteristics of successful Geographers.

Most students achieve an A* or a 7 at MYP before starting, but an A grade or a 6 at MYP with a strong understanding of basic geographical concepts and a genuine interest in the subject would be a minimum threshold. On the odd occasion we might consider taking a student who has not studied Geography in the 4th and 5th form.

Geographers typically study a wide variety of other subjects so it is well-suited to the IB, equally at home in a science-focused combination for a prospective Medical or scientist as well as in combination with other humanities such as Economics, Politics and History. The unique feature of Geography is the breadth of skills it develops, and hence it can complement a wide range of subjects.

Assessment structure

- Paper 1: Core Theme: Patterns and Change (1 hour 30 minutes exam) — 25% for HL; 40% for SL
- Paper 2: Optional Themes (a choice from Freshwater Issues and Conflicts, Oceans and their coastal margins, Extreme Environments, Hazards & Disasters, Food & Health, Urban Environments) (2 hours for HL including 3 options; 1 hr 40 minutes exam for SL including 2 options) — 35% for HL and SL
- Paper 3: Global Interactions (HL only) (1 hour exam) — 20% for HL
- Internal Assessment (coursework) — 20% for HL; 25% for SL

Potential careers

Geography is a highly-valued subject and studying Geography at university can unlock a wide variety of careers which is virtually unparalleled in its breadth. Geographers are always in demand as a consequence of the skills they have acquired and The Guardian (13th August 2015) recently billed it as the “must-have A level” for the following reasons: “Geography is a subject for our times. It is inherently multidisciplinary in a world that increasingly values people who have the skills needed to work across the physical and social sciences… all these are not just intrinsically interesting and valuable. They also encourage ways of seeing and thinking that make geographers eminently employable, which is why, according to the latest information from the Higher Education Careers Services Unit, only 5.8% of geography graduates were still job-hunting six months after they graduated, against an average of 7.3%”. So, beyond explicitly
academic career, be it management consultancy or investment banking; law or urban planning; geologist or politician; meteorologist or journalist; the world is your oyster if you are a Geographer!

Contact for further information
Miss Rachel Trafford, Head of Geography (rta@wellingtoncollege.org.uk)

Link to the IB Geography full specification and summary
https://wellingtoncloud.sharepoint.com/sites/wc-geography/public/_layouts/15/guestaccess.aspx?guestaccesstoken=v%2bj4a%2ffjHNLSV9dyov8vkaBNce85jFPAX5M7RCa6KD4%3d&docid=2_1fb2ceffdca4743e3829a32a84d94b13f&rev=1

http://www.ibo.org/programmes/diploma-programme/curriculum/individuals-and-societies/geography/
IB Environmental Systems & Societies (SL only)

Course description

Environmental Systems and Societies is a cross-disciplinary subject that draws together elements of Biology, Ecology and Geography. It can be chosen as a Group 4 Experimental Science option or as a Group 3 Individuals and Societies option, making it one of the most versatile subjects that the IB offers. It can also count for both Group 3 and 4 in some cases.

The course provides a coherent perspective on the interrelationships between environmental systems and the societies within them, encouraging pupils to develop an informed and personal response to pressing environmental issues. A rigorous and scientific course, ESS involves practical investigations but also develops an understanding of how socio-economic, cultural and political factors help to shape environmental behaviour. A holistic “systems” approach is used and leads pupils to an appreciation of nature and values of internationalism.

All students undertake practical work designed to develop their practical and enquiry skills through fieldwork in preparation for the Internal Assessment, as well as to deepen their understanding of concepts they have studied by observing and experiencing them in reality.

Requirements

Geography and/or Biology GCSE or MYP with at least a grade or a 6 are not prerequisites but would be an advantage. Pupils must be hungry for a deeper understanding about the world in which they live and be willing to explore ideas and current themes such as climate change, population control, and nature conservation. A social, historical and political perspective will be given with scientific reasoning as the driving force. Hence, the ability to work independently and a desire to pursue areas of interest in depth are characteristics of successful students.

Environmental Systems and Societies contains both science and humanities elements and counts as either a Group 3 or Group 4 subject (at SL). This allows pupils who do it in Group 3 essentially to study up to three sciences (including Environmental Systems and Societies), or pupils who take it in Group 4 to study up to three humanities (including Environmental Systems and Societies), in combination with subjects such as Geography, Economics and Politics. It can also count as both a Group 3 and 4 subject, allowing pupils who take it as such to study up to three languages in Group 2 if they wish.

Assessment Structure

- Paper 1: Case Study: response to a previously unseen case study (1 hour) – 25%
- Paper 2: Short answers and structured essays (2 hours) – 50%

Internal Assessment (one individual investigation - coursework) – 25%

Potential careers

The Environmental Systems and Societies course will provide pupils with a broad knowledge base in many of the pressing contemporary and historical socio-ecological issues facing humanity. Such knowledge is useful in careers that deal specifically with society such as journalism, nature conservation, teaching, and politics. Pupils will also develop many transferable skills such as public speaking and presentation delivery, group work and forming and expressing personal opinions. These skills will undoubtedly prepare them for a wide range of careers in management and business. The ability to analyse and reason are key learning outcomes of the course.

Contact for further information

Miss Rachel Trafford, Head of Geography (rrt@wellingtoncollege.org.uk)

Link to the IB ESS specification