

A Level Geography

Head of Geography - Mr R Chambers

"Geography is the subject that holds the key to our future" - Michael Palin



Why Geography?

We are constantly exposed to geographical issues in everyday life, including: environmental concerns; natural disasters; world weather; local developments; urban and rural change; population movements; maps and travel. It is then not surprising that Geography is a popular option choice at AS and A2. Students are provided with an opportunity to develop an awareness and understanding of the patterns, processes and relationships that characterise human and physical environments.

Traditionally Geography is seen as a bridge between the arts and sciences, enabling students to keep their options open. Geography also complements many other AS / A'level subjects. These include in particular: Sciences (Biology, Physics and Chemistry); History; Business Studies and Economics; English, Mathematics, Politics and Ethics.

Course outline: OCR AS/A2 GCE Specification*



Aims of the Course:

The department follow the OCR Level 3 Advanced GCE – A Level Geography course*. The new OCR A level Geography specifications present a dynamic, contemporary and exciting opportunity for students to engage with the world around them. It presents an innovative and fresh approach, offering a strong foundation in both human and physical disciplines inspiring a love of geography for lifelong learning drawing on issues that are relevant to a student's own learning of the subject.

Fieldwork continues to be very important in the delivery of the A Level and the specifications have been designed to strengthen geographical and fieldwork skills. As such there will be a range of opportunities for students to be involved in a very 'hands on' course in which students will participate in day trips, as well as a residential field course.

Assessment and Deadlines

The new A'level is fully linear, so assessment of a students' knowledge and understanding takes place at the end of the two years of study. The first assessment for those starting in September 2018 will be June 2020. This consists of 3 written exams and an independent investigation (see details overleaf).

Department Successes

A Level (A2)

Exam Results 2014-2017

	A* - C	A* - A
2017 -	88%	20.8%
2016 -	93%	33%
2015 -	88.2%	41.2%
2014 -	91.3%	21.7%



The Department

The department has a team of 7 specialist Geography teachers. We are a Geographical Association Centre of Excellence and also hold the Secondary Geography Quality Mark. We have also held the Princes Teaching Institute Geography Mark for the past 4 years in recognition of our commitment to engagement in curriculum improvements and projects to constantly improve subject provision.

We have two specialist rooms designated solely for sixth form teaching with a range of A'level resources available and dedicated space for sixth form students to study.

The department has access to the schools well equipped ICT facilities, including access to a PC suite located within the department. This will support students in accessing ICT to support individual investigations, including access to GIS.

We have our own online portal www.geobytes.org.uk with extensive online support materials to complement courses and providing a gateway to relevant web-based resources. We also have our own dedicated sixth form twitter feed and a department facebook page keeping students constantly up-to-date with Geographical news stories and articles and video clips to support their studies.

The department is well resourced and students are provided with a range of support materials.

We have a long history in using fieldwork to support A level units and put a strong emphasis on the importance of fieldwork in developing geographical understanding.



*Course details are correct at the time of going to press



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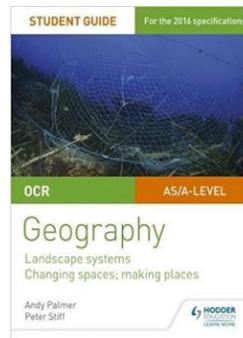
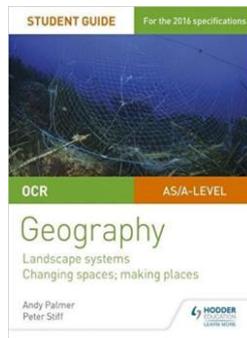
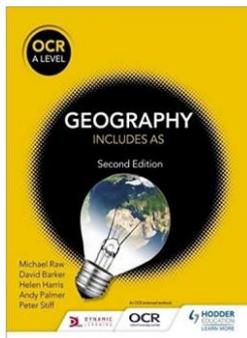
CONTENT AND ASSESSMENT OVERVIEWS*

A Level

A2 Content and Assessment Overview		
Content Overview	Assessment Overview	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Landscape Systems (Glaciation) Earth's Life Support Systems (Water and the Carbon Cycle) Geographical Skills 	<p>Physical Systems (01) 72 marks 1 hour 45 minutes written paper</p>	<p>24% of total AS level</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changing Spaces; Making Places Global Systems (Global Migration) Global Governance (Human Rights) Geographical Skills 	<p>Human Interactions (02) 72 marks 1 hour 45 minutes written paper</p>	<p>24% of total AS level</p>
<p>Optionality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hazardous Earth and Climate Change Geographical Skills 	<p>Geographical Debates (03) 96 marks 2 hours 30 minute written paper</p>	<p>32% of total A'level</p>
<p>Independent Investigation</p>	<p>Investigative Geography (04/05) 60 marks</p>	<p>20% of total A'level</p>



There are a number of published resources to support the course and all teaching resources, PowerPoint's etc. are made available to students through our bespoke Schoology online course.



The independent investigation is a compulsory part of the A2 course and will consist of a written report which will provide learners with the opportunity to develop a wide range of skills which are applicable not only to study in higher education but also in the world of work and life.

*Course details are correct at the time of going to press, however may be subject to change on accreditation

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Supporting Learning

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Fieldwork

Fieldwork and geographical skills are fundamental in supporting the teaching and learning of any geography course and at St Ivo we have a strong tradition of fieldwork and practical 'hands-on' geography which is given a very high priority within the department. Fieldwork effectively enables students to experience at first hand landscapes, people, places and issues, bringing classroom theory to life! We endeavour to provide a wide range of experiences as far as is possible within the time-constraints of an advanced level course. Students are given the opportunity to learn and develop geographical skills, and practise observation and the interpretation of geographical features, supporting concepts introduced in the classroom whilst providing an enjoyable experience for all.

As well as utilising fieldwork to contextualise topic specific skills, the OCR A'Level involves students using geographical and fieldwork skills within their independent investigation. In doing so they will acquire the geographical and fieldwork skills to be able to investigate geographical questions and issues.



Pupils prepare for coastal fieldwork on the N Norfolk Coast

Fieldwork Safety

Both the school and the department believe that student's safety is of paramount importance at all times. A thorough risk assessment is carried out prior to all fieldwork being undertaken and fieldwork is always led by a suitable number of well qualified staff.



Fieldwork opportunities at A Level

Whilst exact fieldwork experiences to support the new specification are yet to be developed, they are likely to build on our current experiences offered which include:

- a four day residential in Snowdonia
- urban geography studies in London (Changing Place, Making Spaces)
- Epping Forest – Water and the Carbon Cycle
- lectures in association with the University of Cambridge and the local Geographical Association
- an optional bi-annual international 'geography experience' - designed to widen students geographical understanding and experience of the world - in the past destinations have included Kenya and South Africa (we hope to run one in two years time).

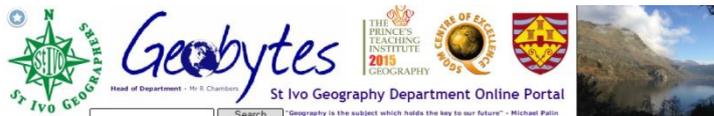
GIS (Geographical Information Systems)

Students will explore opportunities and benefits of presenting and analysing geographical data through the use of Geographical Information Systems such as ArcGIS online.



Exploring the Glacial Landscapes of Snowdonia

Enhancing Geographical Learning with new technologies.



In the Geography department we believe that the geography curriculum can be complemented and greatly enhanced with new online technologies. As well as access to school facilities for processing and data manipulation, the department makes use of GIS and Google Earth. We also try and provide students with access to a variety of online learning resources through the use of our GeoBytes online portal (www.geobytes.org.uk). The A Level section includes revision materials and links to useful materials to support independent study and direct links across to the department's A Level Schoology course. There is also the popular sixth form twitter feed [@StIvoGeogAlevel](https://twitter.com/StIvoGeogAlevel).



www.geobytes.org.uk



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Geography & Beyond

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Geography and the World of Work

Geography at A Level provides a wide and varied base for entry into university and many practical professions. It can be successfully combined with both arts and science subjects as a foundation for higher or ongoing education.

"It is inherently multidisciplinary in a world that increasingly values people who have the skills needed to work across the physical and social sciences" (Guardian, 2015).

Opportunities for geography graduates include cartography, finance surveying, environmental and ecological work, teaching and travel and tourism amongst many others.

Geography provides students with an opportunity not only to develop a detailed subject-specific knowledge and understanding but also to develop proficiency in a wide range of transferable skills. These skills are applicable to a very wide range of potential career opportunities.

Transferrable Skills..

Skills developed on the A Level Geography course include:

- Data gathering and manipulation
- Enquiry work and decision making
- Independent research and investigation
- Statistical Analysis
- Team Work
- Report Writing
- Summarising and synthesising information succinctly
- Geographic Information Systems and spatial analysis

As many employers offer their own specialised training programmes, these transferable skills developed during the geography course are seen as very valuable by employers.

A-levels
Comment is free

The Guardian view on geography: it's the must-have A-level Editorial

It used to be a Cinderella subject. Now, in a world that increasingly values people who can work across the physical and social sciences, geography's all the rage

Thursday 13 August 2015 19:06 BST

Shares: 28,299 | Comments: 132

Save for Later

News article from The Guardian August 2015 on the value of Geography A Level.

Geographers are seen as eminently employable. Latest statistics show that only 5.8% of geography graduates were still job-hunting six months after graduation, against an average of 7.3%. (The Guardian)

The transferrable skills Geography develops means the list of careers is endless but may include the following...

- Care about the planet?**
 - Estate Manager
 - Forestry Ranger
 - Environmental Consultant
 - Pollution Analyst
 - Conservation Officer
- Interested in world events?**
 - Aid Worker
 - Diplomat
 - Refugee Advisor
 - Charity Coordinator
- Interested in human behaviour?**
 - Planner
 - Social Worker
 - Market Researcher
 - Housing Officer
 - Estate Agent
- Discover new places!**
 - Travel Agent
 - Tourism Officer
 - Eco-Tourism Advisor
 - Tour Guide
 - Media Researcher
- Fascinated by maps?**
 - GIS Specialist
 - Cartographer
 - Utilities Manager
 - Remote Sensing Analyst
- Other professions...**
 - Accountant
 - Lawyer
 - Teacher
 - Finance
 - Photographer
- Want to know why people work where they do?**
 - Economic Developer
 - Location Analyst
 - Retailer
 - Regional Developer
 - Transport Manager
- Enjoy being in the landscape?**
 - Hydrologist
 - Coastal Manager
 - Geologist
 - Civil Engineer
 - Soil Conservationist
- Interested in Weather?**
 - Weather Presenter
 - Disaster Manager
 - Flood Prevention Officer
 - Risk Assessor
 - Water Supply Coordinator

Please do talk to your geography teacher if you have any questions or send us an email. Your sixth form options are very important decisions - so please ask for any advice if you need.



ST IVO SCHOOL GEOGRAPHY DEPARTMENT

St Ivo School, High Leys
 St Ives, Cambridgeshire PE27 6RR
 Phone: 01480 302953 (Direct Dial)
 Fax: 01480 375444
 E-mail: geography@stivoschool.org
 Website: www.geobytes.org.uk



www.geobytes.org.uk



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