

AS / A Level Geography

For First Teaching September 2016 onwards

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 intend to follow the OCR Level 3 Advanced GCE (A'level) and Advanced Subsidiary (AS) from September 2016 (this is still subject to accreditation of the specification). The new OCR AS/A level Geography specifications present a dynamic, contemporary and exciting opportunity for students to engage with the world around them. It presents an exciting 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 AS / 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 AS level is a stand-alone qualification - the first assessment of this course will be in June 2017 (teaching starting September 2016). This consists of 2 written exams (see detailed assessment overleaf).

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 2016 will be June 2018. This consists of 3 written exams and an independent investigation (see details overleaf).

Department Successes

A Level (A2)

Exam Results 2012-2015

	A*- C	A*-A
2015 -	88.2%	41.2%
2014 -	91.3%	21.7%
2013 -	100%	43.6%
2012 -	95.2%	57.1%



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 2 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.

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 AS / 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, however may be subject to change on accreditation



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CONTENT AND ASSESSMENT OVERVIEWS*

AS

AS Content and Assessment Overview		
Content Overview	Assessment Overview	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Landscape Systems Changing Spaces; Making Places Fieldwork Geographical Skills 	Landscapes and Place (01) 90 marks 2 hour written paper	60% of total AS level
Optionality - Hazardous Earth <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Geographical Skills 	Geographical debates (02) 60 marks 1 hour 30 minute written paper	40% of total AS level



A Level

A2 Content and Assessment Overview		
Content Overview	Assessment Overview	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Landscape Systems Earth's Life Support Systems Geographical Skills 	Physical Systems (01) 72 marks 1 hour 45 minutes written paper	24% of total AS level
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changing Spaces; Making Places Global Connections Geographical Skills 	Human Interactions (02) 72 marks 1 hour 45 minutes written paper	24% of total AS level
Optionality <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hazardous Earth and one other to be decided (probably Climate Change or Disease Dilemmas) Geographical Skills 	Geographical Debates (03) 96 marks 2 hours 30 minute written paper	32% of total A'level
Independent Investigation	Investigative Geography (04/05) 60 marks	20% of total A'level



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.

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Supporting Learning

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Fieldwork

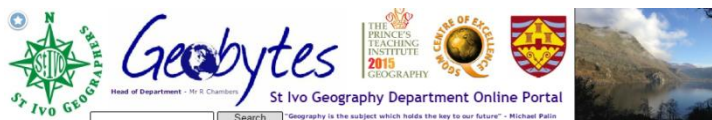
Fieldwork and geographical skills are fundamental in supporting the teaching and learning of any geography course and at St Ivo we have a strong tradition of fieldwork and practical 'hands-on' geography which is given a very high priority within the department. Fieldwork effectively enables students 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.



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). This has been re-launched for September 2015 and a new A Level area is to be created ready for the 2016 teaching of the new A Level. This will include revision materials and links to useful materials to support independent study. There is also the popular sixth form twitter feed [@StIvoGeogAlevel](https://twitter.com/StIvoGeogAlevel).



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.



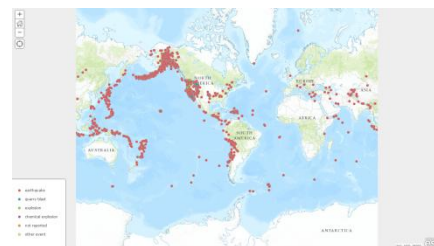
Fieldwork opportunities at AS and A Level

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
- coastal studies in North Norfolk
- urban geography studies in London
- 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.

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.



Geography & Beyond

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Geography and the World of Work

Geography at AS and 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.

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)

Transferrable Skills..

Skills developed on the A Level Geography course include:

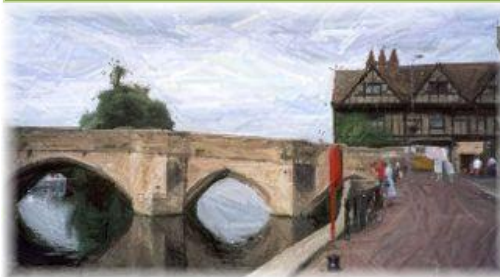
- Data gathering and manipulation
- Enquiry work and decision making
- Independent research and investigation
- Statistical Analysis
- Team Work
- Report Writing
- Summarising and synthesising information succinctly
- Geographic Information Systems and spatial analysis

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

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



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



@StIvoGeogAlevel
@StIvoGeography



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