Cornwallis Academy
Ambitions for All

SMILE
SUCCESSFUL | MOTIVATED | INSPIRED | LEARNING | EXCITED & ENGAGED

Year 9 Geography

Year 9 Geography develops students' understanding of some of the most significant physical and human geographical challenges facing the contemporary world. Students build upon knowledge developed throughout Years 7 and 8 to investigate how power, resources, global connections, development and physical processes shape places at a range of scales. The curriculum encourages students to recognise that geographical issues are interconnected: political and economic decisions influence resource use and development, while physical processes such as climate change, tectonic activity and extreme weather create different challenges for people and places. Throughout Year 9, students increasingly move from describing geographical patterns towards explaining, analysing and evaluating them. They interpret maps, graphs, photographs and numerical data, compare contrasting places and perspectives, and construct evidence-based geographical arguments, providing an important bridge between Key Stage 3 and GCSE Geography.

Term 1: Superpowers

Learning Objectives

Students investigate how global power is distributed and how countries use different forms of influence to shape international affairs. They examine the changing balance of global power and consider whether the dominance of established powers such as the USA is being challenged by emerging countries.

Key Questions:

- What is a superpower and how do they use hard, soft and smart power?
- Why is the USA a superpower and how do IGOs influence global power?
- Who are the BRICS and why are they becoming more powerful?
- Why are China and India emerging superpowers and what are the challenges?
- How powerful is the UK today and what happened to the British Empire as a global power?
- What happens when superpowers disagree and what is the future of geopolitics?

Geographical knowledge and skills include defining superpower, hard power, soft power and smart power; comparing economic, military, political, cultural and demographic influence; explaining the role of IGOs; analysing changing global power; and interpreting maps and economic indicators.

What previous knowledge is required?

Students build on Year 7 Our Geography, which developed locational knowledge of the UK, Europe and the wider world and introduced connections between places. Year 7 Population & India introduced India as an emerging country and considered why it is becoming globally important. Year 8 Development introduced differences in wealth and development, while the Nigeria case study introduced the idea of an emerging economy. Year 8 Food also introduced international trade and global resource flows. Students can therefore apply existing knowledge of development, population and economic indicators to the study of global power.

How will this term's content help with future learning?

This topic establishes important foundations for Globalisation later in Year 9 because students understand why some countries and organisations have greater influence over trade, investment and international decision-making. Knowledge of China, India, the USA and emerging economies supports later study of TNCs and global production. It also prepares students for GCSE Geography through the study of global inequality, development and international relationships. Students develop the ability to compare countries using evidence and to explain changing patterns over time. At A-level, these ideas are developed substantially through Globalisation and Superpowers, including emerging powers, IGOs, TNCs and global governance.

Common Misconceptions

- The most powerful country is simply the country with the strongest military.
- Hard power always involves warfare.
- Soft power means being politically weak.
- The USA controls all international organisations.
- BRICS is a single country or a military alliance like NATO.
- The British Empire and the modern United Kingdom are the same thing.

National Curriculum / Specification

- Locational knowledge: extend knowledge of the world's countries and globally significant places.
- Place knowledge: understand geographical similarities, differences and links between places.
- Human geography: international development, economic activity and the use of natural resources.
- Geographical skills: interpret maps, data and evidence to compare the influence of countries and global organisations.

Term 2: Water Resources

Learning Objectives

Students investigate water as an essential but unevenly distributed global resource. They develop their understanding of the hydrological cycle before examining why some places experience water scarcity and how future environmental and demographic change could increase pressure on water supplies.

Key Questions:

- What is the water cycle and what are the processes?
- What is water scarcity and what are the causes?
- How will water availability change in the future?
- Why is there water scarcity in Las Vegas, USA?
- How can water supply be increased?
- What is the future of water supply around the world?

Students distinguish physical and economic water scarcity, explain variations in water availability, examine population growth, agriculture, urbanisation and climate change as pressures, and evaluate strategies such as dams, reservoirs, transfers, desalination, recycling and conservation.

What previous knowledge is required?

Year 7 Weather, Climate & Extreme Environments introduced the water cycle, rainfall and climate, including evaporation, condensation and precipitation. Year 7 Population & India introduced population growth and increasing pressure on resources. Year 8 Rivers and Cities developed this through drainage-basin processes such as infiltration, runoff and river discharge. Year 8 Food demonstrated the dependence of agriculture on reliable water supplies and introduced resource insecurity. Students therefore enter this topic with both physical and human foundations for understanding water supply and demand.

How will this term's content help with future learning?

Water Resources prepares students for the Weather & Climate topic later in Year 9, particularly changing precipitation, drought and the impacts of climate change. It reinforces the relationship between physical and human geography by showing that water insecurity can result from both environmental conditions and human decisions. Students practise evaluating management strategies and considering sustainability rather than assuming that increasing supply is always the best solution. This supports GCSE study of resource management, climate change and sustainable management. It also develops the ability to interpret resource maps, graphs and data and reach evidence-based judgements.

Common Misconceptions

- The Earth is simply running out of water.
- Water scarcity only occurs in deserts.
- All rainfall immediately enters rivers.
- Drought and water scarcity mean exactly the same thing.
- Wealthy countries cannot experience water scarcity.
- Increasing water supply always solves water shortages.

National Curriculum / Specification

• Physical geography: hydrology, weather and climate, climate change, and interactions between physical and human processes.
• Place knowledge: compare water availability and management in contrasting places.
• Human geography: understand population pressure, resource demand and the management of water resources.
• Geographical skills: interpret maps, graphs and data showing water availability, scarcity and future demand.

Term 3: Globalisation

Learning Objectives

Students investigate how increasing connections between countries have transformed economies, societies and places. They examine the importance of technology, international trade and transnational corporations (TNCs), and evaluate the benefits and costs associated with increasing global interconnectedness.

Key Questions:
• What is globalisation and how has technology impacted globalisation?
• What is outsourcing and offshoring?
• What is global trade and why is it important?
• What are TNCs and why are they important?
• What are the positive and negative impacts of TNCs?
• What is the positive multiplier effect and the cycle of poverty?

Students examine flows of goods, services, capital, information and people; global supply chains; outsourcing and offshoring; the role of TNCs; the multiplier effect; and the ways globalisation can create both opportunities and inequalities.

What previous knowledge is required?

Term 1 Superpowers introduced global economic and political connections and the importance of the USA, China, India and other emerging economies. Year 8 Development introduced differences in wealth and development between countries, while the Nigeria case study considered economic growth, foreign investment and development strategies. Year 8 Food introduced international trade, Fairtrade and connections between producers and consumers. Students therefore already understand that countries are economically connected and that these connections can have unequal outcomes.

How will this term's content help with future learning?

Students develop an understanding of how individual places are connected to a wider global economic system. This directly supports the Africa topic by helping students explain international investment, trade, tourism and uneven development. Globalisation also provides a foundation for GCSE topics involving development, emerging economies and changing economic structures. Students strengthen their ability to trace chains of cause and effect from decisions made by businesses and consumers to impacts in distant places. They also learn to evaluate winners and losers rather than viewing globalisation as entirely positive or negative. At A-level, these concepts are developed through TNCs, global production networks, global shift, outsourcing, migration and international governance.

Common Misconceptions

• Globalisation only means international trade.
• Globalisation is entirely a recent phenomenon.
• Outsourcing and offshoring mean exactly the same thing.
• TNCs only benefit richer countries.
• TNC investment automatically eliminates poverty.
• All workers and places benefit equally from globalisation.

National Curriculum / Specification

• Human geography: international development, economic activity, globalisation and international trade.
• Place knowledge: understand geographical similarities, differences and links between places at different levels of development.
• Locational knowledge: develop knowledge of globally significant countries and their economic connections.
• Geographical skills: analyse maps, flows and data showing trade, TNC activity and global connections.

Term 4: Africa

Learning Objectives

Students undertake a regional study of Africa, challenging stereotypes and developing an understanding of the continent's enormous physical, human, economic and cultural diversity.

Key Questions:
- Where is Africa and what are the human and physical features?
- What are the biomes and climates across Africa?
- What is the population distribution across Africa?
- How has tourism helped Tunisia and has it been successful?
- Why is the River Nile a source of conflict in Africa?
- Why does Niger remain underdeveloped?

Students locate countries and major physical features, explain climate and biome patterns, analyse population distribution, investigate tourism in Tunisia, examine competing demands for River Nile water and explore the causes of underdevelopment in Niger.

What previous knowledge is required?

Year 7 map and atlas skills support the location of African countries and physical features. Year 7 Weather, Climate & Extreme Environments provides knowledge of climate, ecosystems and biomes, while Population & India introduced population density and distribution. Year 8 Development provides understanding of development indicators, HDI and causes of uneven development, and Nigeria gives students an existing African case study. Year 9 Water Resources supports understanding of competition for Nile water, while Globalisation provides knowledge of tourism, investment and international economic connections.

How will this term's content help with future learning?

This topic develops detailed place knowledge of Africa and teaches students to reject continent-wide generalisations in favour of recognising variations in environment, population, development and economic activity. It strengthens GCSE preparation by integrating development, resources, population, ecosystems and economic change within real places. Students become more confident comparing countries within the same continent and explaining why their experiences differ. The study of Niger develops understanding of the interacting physical, historical, economic and political causes of underdevelopment. The Nile case study also prepares students to consider resource conflict, stakeholder views and sustainable management in future geographical study.

Common Misconceptions

- Africa is a country rather than a continent.
- Most of Africa is desert.
- All African countries are poor or underdeveloped.
- Africa has one culture, climate or landscape.
- Africa's population is evenly distributed.
- Underdevelopment in Niger has one simple cause.

National Curriculum / Specification

- Locational knowledge: extend knowledge of the world's countries with a specific focus on Africa and its major physical and human features.
- Place knowledge: understand similarities, differences and links between contrasting places across Africa.
- Human geography: population, international development, economic activity and the use of natural resources.
- Physical geography: understand how climate, biomes and river systems influence people and places across Africa.

Term 5: Natural Hazards

Learning Objectives

Students investigate the physical processes responsible for tectonic hazards and why their impacts differ considerably between places. Students move beyond simply describing disasters towards analysing risk, vulnerability, impacts, responses and management.

Key Questions:
- What is a natural hazard and where are volcanoes and earthquakes located?
- What are the different plate boundaries?
- What are the causes, impacts and responses of earthquakes in LIDCs (Haiti)?
- What are the causes, impacts and responses of earthquakes in ACs (Italy)?
- How do volcanoes form and what are the different types of volcano?
- How can we reduce the risks of tectonic hazards?

Students study plate tectonics, earthquake and volcanic processes, compare Haiti and Italy, distinguish primary and secondary impacts and immediate and long-term responses, and evaluate monitoring, prediction, protection and planning.

What previous knowledge is required?

Year 7 map skills allow students to describe global distributions and locate tectonic hazards. Earlier physical geography established that Earth's environments are shaped by natural processes. Year 8 Development introduced differences in wealth, infrastructure and quality of life, while Year 8 flooding introduced the concepts of hazard, impact and response. Comparing flooding in countries at different levels of development provides a conceptual model for comparing Haiti and Italy. Students can therefore link the physical magnitude of an event to differences in vulnerability and capacity to respond.

How will this term's content help with future learning?

This topic directly develops concepts that students will encounter in GCSE Natural/Global Hazards, including tectonic processes, vulnerability, hazard management and contrasting case studies. Students develop the important understanding that disaster severity is not determined solely by physical magnitude; development, governance, infrastructure, preparedness and vulnerability influence human consequences. This strengthens comparative writing and the use of evidence to explain contrasting impacts. Students also practise evaluating strategies for reducing hazard risk. The concepts of risk, vulnerability, impacts and responses create a strong bridge into Term 6, where similar thinking is applied to atmospheric hazards.

Common Misconceptions

- Tectonic plates are the same as continents.
- Earthquakes only occur at destructive plate boundaries.
- The strongest earthquake always causes the greatest number of deaths.
- Earthquakes themselves directly cause every recorded impact.
- Volcanoes only have negative impacts.
- Scientists can accurately predict exactly when an earthquake will occur.

National Curriculum / Specification

- Physical geography: tectonic hazards and interactions between physical and human processes.
- Locational knowledge: understand the global distribution of major physical features and hazard zones.
- Place knowledge: compare contrasting locations and levels of development through hazard case studies.
- Geographical skills: interpret maps, diagrams and data and use evidence to explain variations in hazard impacts and responses.

Term 6: Weather & Climate

Learning Objectives

Students consolidate and substantially extend the foundations established in Year 7. They move from understanding basic weather and climate to explaining global atmospheric patterns, climate change and extreme atmospheric hazards.

Key Questions:
- What is the difference between weather and climate?
- How is rain created and what are the different types of rainfall?
- How does latitude affect climate and where are the world's climate zones located?
- What are the natural and human causes of climate change?
- What are tropical cyclones and how do they form?
- What are the impacts and responses to tropical cyclones in ACs and LIDCs?

Students explain relief, convectional and frontal rainfall, relationships between latitude and climate, natural and anthropogenic climate change, the enhanced greenhouse effect, tropical cyclone formation and the influence of development on hazard impacts and responses.

What previous knowledge is required?

This topic deliberately revisits Year 7 Weather, Climate & Extreme Environments: the difference between weather and climate, measuring weather, the water cycle, rainfall, climate graphs and global climate environments. Year 8 Development supports comparisons of vulnerability, while Year 8 Food introduced the impact of climate change on food production. Year 9 Water Resources provides knowledge of drought and changing precipitation. Term 5 Natural Hazards supplies the concepts of hazard, vulnerability, impacts, responses and risk reduction that students now apply to atmospheric hazards.

How will this term's content help with future learning?

The topic provides a direct bridge into GCSE Geography because students already understand fundamental atmospheric processes before encountering them at greater depth. Students enter GCSE with knowledge of weather hazards, climate change, tropical cyclones, vulnerability, impacts, responses and hazard management. It completes an important progression from Year 7: students initially learned what weather and climate are, whereas by the end of Year 9 they explain why global climatic patterns occur. Students also evaluate why similar hazards produce different outcomes in different places. This prepares them for increasingly complex GCSE explanations that combine physical processes with human vulnerability and management.

Common Misconceptions

- Weather and climate mean the same thing.
- All rainfall forms through the same process.
- Places near the Equator are warmer simply because they are physically closer to the Sun.
- The greenhouse effect is entirely caused by humans.
- Climate change means every place will simply become hotter.
- Tropical cyclones form directly on the Equator.

National Curriculum / Specification

- Physical geography: weather and climate, climate change, tropical cyclones and interactions between physical and human processes.
- Locational knowledge: understand global climate zones and spatial patterns of weather and climate.
- Place knowledge: compare the impacts and responses to tropical cyclones in contrasting places.
- Geographical skills: interpret climate graphs, maps and hazard data and use evidence to explain patterns and impacts.