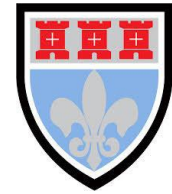


# Preparing for A Level Geography or want to just develop your Geography further?

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Hoping to study Geography at A Level? **Or** maybe you are simply interested in taking some time to further your understanding of the geography you have studied at GCSE?

**There are number of things you can do:**

1. **Developing as a geographer** – through general reading around / watching videos / listening to podcasts etc. to develop your geographical knowledge and understanding
2. **Preparing for the A Level Course** Starting to explore the topics and their foundations which will be studied in the A Level course.

To be a great geographer you need to develop the ability to think synoptically, being able to see the greater overview and how everything begins to link together. Geography is not just about studying people and landscapes; it is also the relationships that exist between people and their environment.

At GCSE you have covered a lot of the foundations of the underpinning concepts; physical processes and how they have shaped the landscape and the key human processes that shape our society. GCSE has provided a breadth of study, whereas A Level will now enable you to gain greater depth by exploring topics in greater detail but also encouraging you to see and explore the links between topics.

The best geographers at A Level keep reading the news and generally seek to improve their geographical understanding by engaging with geographical discussions regarding key issues.

This guide has been designed for you to be able to dip in and out of, from looking at general geographical issues and developing your ability to think like a geographer, through to starting to explore some of the topics we will be looking at in Year 12 and 13 so you can do some valuable background reading.

## DEVELOPING AS A GEOGRAPHER

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**The below includes, websites, books, podcasts, documentaries and even films which provide a great way of staying inspired and engaging with geography.**

### i. ONLINE NEWS ARTICLES

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**THE CONVERSATION.COM** <http://theconversation.com/uk> *we can highly recommend you use this!* This you will find is really useful to support many of your A Levels. It provides up-to-date articles from academics and specialists in the field written in a way that is accessible to all, summarising key points in short but insightful articles.

**BBC NEWS** <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news> - an excellent source of up-to-date articles – explore the key headings such as Science, as well as the UK, World and other stories.

**THE GUARDIAN** <https://www.theguardian.com/uk> - again many useful articles and logically ordered – keep an eye on the Environment, Science, Society, Global Development stories in particular!

## ii. PODCASTS

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Now is the time to broaden your geographical understanding! Stick your headphones in and listen to some of the following...

**Costing the Earth** – There are some great podcasts here to pick from on a wide variety of geographical issues <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006r4wn/episodes/player> (many topics, including amongst others.. climate change, carbon, urban greening, deforestation, alternative power, plastics etc.)

**Royal Geographical Society – “Ask the Geographer podcasts”** - <https://www.rgs.org/schools/teaching-resources/ask-the-expert-podcasts/> - a fantastic set of podcasts to keep A Level studies up-to-date with the latest geographical research – pick out some that interest you and give them a go!

## iii. ONLINE NEWS ARTICLES

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Remember you can make use of the local libraries digital library service for books – you don't have to access hard copies.

**Prisoners of Geography** (Marshall, T) – an insightful book which helps understand how physical geography impacts on political reality and really helps to understand how decisions of world leaders have been shaped by geography – a great introduction to geopolitics.

**Factfulness: Ten reasons we're wrong about the world – and why things are better than you think** (Rosling, H 2019) – this is a must-read book from a geography perspective – this takes a more realistic view of the world, presenting issues in fact-based context. It is a rational look at actually how far the world has measurably improved and what's left to be done.

**Adventures in the Anthropocene** (Vince, G) (2016) – this looks at the effects that humans are having on the surface and structure of the planet with a balanced view on recognising threats and dangers whilst also look for practical answers and solutions.

## iv. GEOGRAPHICAL DOCUMENTARIES

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*There are some great geographical documentaries which will help develop your general geographical knowledge and understanding and help you see what an amazing world we live in.*

*The following are all available on **iPlayer**.*

- **David Attenborough Box Sets** – there are 9 amazing boxsets available on iplayer from David Attenborough exploring our amazing world <https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/group/p06m42d9>
- **The Americas with Simon Reeve** <https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episodes/m00095p0/theamericas-with-simon-reeve>
- **Simon Reeve around the world** <https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/group/p06rrnkm>
- **Mediterranean with Simon Reeve** <https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episodes/b0bnb6tt/mediterranean-with-simon-reeve>

The following are all available on **ITV Hub**

- **Britain Underwater: Fighting the Floods** <https://www.itv.com/hub/britain-underwater-fighting-the-floods/7a0157>
- **Joanna Lumley's Hidden Caribbean: Havana to Haiti** <https://www.itv.com/hub/joanna-lumleyshidden-caribbean-havana-to-haiti/2a7578>

The following are all available on **Channel 4 – On Demand**

- **When the Immigrants Leave** (Dispatches) <https://www.channel4.com/programmes/dispatches/on-demand/69555-001>
  - **China's Lonely Hearts** (Unreported World) <https://www.channel4.com/programmes/unreported-world/on-demand/56011-011>
  - **The world's dirtiest river** (Unreported world) <https://www.channel4.com/programmes/unreported-world/on-demand/58399-001>
  - **Forests of Fear** (Unreported World) - <https://www.channel4.com/programmes/unreportedworld/on-demand/69224-006>
  - **Hurricane Hell (Unreported World)** <https://www.channel4.com/programmes/unreportedworld/on-demand/69224-007>
  - **The World's Dirtiest Air (Unreported World)** <https://www.channel4.com/programmes/unreported-world/on-demand/67193-002>
  - **The week Britain Froze (Dispatches)** <https://www.channel4.com/programmes/dispatches/on-demand/66548-007>
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## v. GEOGRAPHICAL FILMS

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(some are available online free – others may be available on providers such as Amazon Prime / Netflix etc.)

- **Touching the Void (15)** (great for visualising glacial landscapes) – a powerful true story docudrama (strong language in parts)
- **Before the Flood (2016) (PG)** – National Geographic <https://www.filmsforaction.org/watch/before-the-flood-2016/> (presented by Leonardo DiCaprio – exploring climate change and looking at what needs to be done today to prevent catastrophic disruption of life on our planet.
- **The Impossible (2012) (12)** – Movie based on real life events of the 2004 Boxing Day tsunami which killed 200,000 people.
- **Slumdog Millionaire (15)** – based on life in the slums of Mumbai
- **Our Planet** (Netflix series) – explores how climate change impacts all living creatures.
- **Mandela: Long Walk to Freedom (12)** – an epic which celebrates the journey of Nelson Mandela from childhood in a rural village through to his election as President of South Africa. This explores what happened in South Africa with regards to apartheid and Black opposition through the eyes of Nelson Mandela.
- **Hotel Rwanda (12)** - the true story of hotel manager who houses and protects Tutsi refugees – this is a hard-hitting film based on the Rwandan Conflict of the 1990s.

- **The Last King of Scotland (15)** – another hard-hitting story, based on struggles faced by Uganda under the dictatorship of Idi Amin.
- **Into the Wild (2007) (15)** – based on the story of a university graduate who gives up all of his material possessions and journeys alone into the Alaskan Wilderness

## PREPARING FOR A LEVEL GEOGRAPHY AT ST MARY'S

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At St Mary's we follow the AQA A Level. You will have two examined units (one Physical and one Human) and one NEA (Non-Examined Assessment) i.e. an independent geographical investigation.

We have put the following together for you for you to start doing some reading round the topics we will be covering across the two years. For each topic, we have given a brief overview and then some starting points, with examples of reading and video links for you to follow up.

If you want to know where to start, in the September of Year 12 we start with Water and Carbon Cycle (Physical Geography) and Changing Places (Human Geography).

If you have any questions whilst exploring the following please do not hesitate to contact us.

### **UNIT 1 - PHYSICAL SYSTEMS**

At St Mary's, we cover the following two topics for Unit 1.

#### **Topic 1 - Water and the Carbon Cycle**

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*Water and carbon are fundamental to supporting life on earth and are hence regarded as 'earth's life support systems. Water and carbon are cycled in both open and closed systems between the land, oceans and the atmosphere. The processes in the water and carbon cycles are inter-related. Human activity is increasingly threatening and altering water and carbon cycles for example through deforestation, ocean acidification, desertification etc. We will contemplate the magnitude and significance of the cycles at a variety of scales, their relevance to wider geography and their central importance for human populations. It is important that we look at global and national solutions to protect these.*

#### **Core Reading and Quizzes: Water and Carbon cycles on Cool Geography**

[http://www.coolgeography.co.uk/advanced/water\\_carbon\\_cycles.php](http://www.coolgeography.co.uk/advanced/water_carbon_cycles.php) - This has all the course notes (with videos and graphics) and after each section there is a quizlet set for you to test your knowledge. This is the best place to start. All provided for you by Mr Gamesby.

**Extra Reading: Water and Carbon Cycling (Royal Geographical Society)** – this is an excellent starting point

/ content overview for the water and carbon work that we will be looking at

<https://www.rgs.org/CMSPages/GetFile.aspx?nodeguid=6dc9f1c1-f92d-4c04-9f859985844a6a79&lang=en-GB>

#### **Extra Reading: Introduction to the Carbon Cycle**

<https://www.khanacademy.org/science/biology/ecology/biogeochemical-cycles/a/the-carbon-cycle>

#### **Extra Reading: Introduction to the Water Cycle**

<https://www.khanacademy.org/science/biology/ecology/biogeochemical-cycles/a/the-water-cycle>

## Topic 2 - Coastal systems and landscapes

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*In this unit you will explore coastal zones, which are dynamic environments in which landscapes develop by the interaction of winds, waves, currents and terrestrial and marine sediments. The operation and outcomes of fundamental geomorphological processes and their association with distinctive landscapes are readily observable. In common with water and carbon cycles, a systems approach to study is specified.*

### Starting points...

**Video: Power of the Planet (Oceans)** <https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x5amshu> - a GREAT introduction to the work we will be doing on Coasts in year 12.

**Reading:** All about the coasts topic <https://www.alevelgeography.com/coasts/> - this is a website that has notes covering all the coasts topics we will cover, so a great place to start building a solid foundation of knowledge.

**Quiz:** Some Quizlet sets to test your coastal knowledge!  
[http://www.coolgeography.co.uk/advanced/coastal\\_systems.php](http://www.coolgeography.co.uk/advanced/coastal_systems.php)

## Topic 3 - Hazards

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*This optional section of our specification focuses on the lithosphere and the atmosphere, which intermittently but regularly present natural hazards to human populations, often in dramatic and sometimes catastrophic fashion. By exploring the origin and nature of these hazards and the various ways in which people respond to them, students are able to engage with many dimensions of the relationships between people and the environments they occupy.*

### Starting points...

**Video:** Power of the Planet (Volcanoes) <https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x5af4kg> - a great introduction to the work we will be doing on volcanoes.

**Reading:** Plate Tectonics (The Geological Society) <https://www.geolsoc.org.uk/PlateTectonics> – this will be a good step up from your GCSE work to A Level and is definitely worth reading / working through

**USGS Natural Hazards – FAQ** <https://www.usgs.gov/faq/natural-hazards> – some excellent reading here in bitesize chunks – well worth exploring

**Video:** Path of the Typhoon <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nj-mFvWjiU> – a brill documentary on tropical storms including their formation, impacts and management.

**Reading:** Tropical cyclone facts <https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/research/weather/tropical-cyclones/facts> - Information on tropical cyclones from the Met Office covering lots of aspects of this section of the topic.

**Video:** Inside The Wildfire | How Firefighters Respond <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bArUvESIRYk> – This highlights the devastation of forest fires around the world as well as sharing how firefighters respond to a wildfire scenario and forest fire scenes, including footage and information on the Australian wildfires of 2019.

**Reading:** How wildfires work <https://science.howstuffworks.com/nature/natural-disasters/wildfire.htm> - Lots of fab information on wildfires.

## UNIT 2 – HUMAN INTERACTIONS

At St Mary's, we follow the AQA A Level specification and we cover the following topics for Unit 2.

### Topic 1 - Changing Places

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*This unit explores the relationships and connections between people, the economy and society and their contributing to placemaking (i.e. creating places). The unit explores the meanings and representations attached to places and how place making takes place at a variety of scales. It explores places from a local to global level.*

#### Starting points...

**Interactive: Changing Spaces, Making Places** – a good story map introduction – work your way through

<https://focusschoolwilto.maps.arcgis.com/apps/Cascade/index.html?appid=f10c512164d0498d8f3bcfad8ae61d39>

**Reading: Changing Places** <https://pmt.physicsandmathstutor.com/download/Geography/A-level/Notes/AQA/Changing-Places/Detailed%20Notes%20-%20Changing%20Places%20-%20AQA%20Geography%20A-level.pdf> - the link above is to a pdf with detailed notes on our Changing Places topic. The website this is from also has a reduced notes version and some more fab reading resources (<https://www.physicsandmathstutor.com/geography-revision/a-level-aqa/changing-places/>)

**Quizzes:** [http://www.coolgeography.co.uk/advanced/changing\\_places.php](http://www.coolgeography.co.uk/advanced/changing_places.php) - set of quizlets for you to test your knowledge.

### Topic 2 - Contemporary urban environments

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*This optional section of our specification focuses on urban growth and change which are seemingly ubiquitous processes and present significant environmental and social challenges for human populations. The section examines these processes and challenges and the issues associated with them, in particular the potential for environmental sustainability and social cohesion. Engaging with these themes in a range of urban settings from contrasting areas of the world affords the opportunity for students to appreciate human diversity and develop awareness and insight into profound questions of opportunity, equity and sustainability.*

#### Starting points...

**Core Reading and Quizzes: Contemporary Urban Environments on Cool Geography**

<http://www.coolgeography.co.uk/advanced/contemporary.php> - This has all the course notes (with videos and graphics) and after each section there is a quizlet set for you to test your knowledge. This is the best place to start. All provided for you by Mr Gamesby.

**Reading: Contemporary Urban Environments** <https://www.physicsandmathstutor.com/geography-revision/a-level-aqa/contemporary-urban-environments/> - This website has essential and detailed notes for this topic as well as case studies for you to read.

**Video: City of the Future: Singapore** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xi6r3hZe5Tg> – This is a super video that considers issues with growing urban population and how Singapore's is using the latest innovations and technology to build a future city.

### Topic 3 - Global systems and global governance

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*This section of our specification focuses on globalisation – the economic, political and social changes associated with technological and other driving forces which have been a key feature of global economy and society in recent decades. Increased interdependence and transformed relationships between peoples, states and environments have prompted more or less successful attempts at a global level to manage and govern some aspects of human affairs. Students engage with important dimensions of these phenomena with particular emphasis on international trade and access to markets and the governance of the global commons. Students contemplate many complex dimensions of contemporary world affairs and their own place in and perspective on them.*

#### Starting points...

**Reading: Global Systems and Governance** <https://www.physicsandmathstutor.com/geography-revision/a-level-aqa/global-systems-and-governance/> - This website has essential and detailed notes for this topic as well as case studies for you to read.

**Quizzes:** [http://www.coolgeography.co.uk/advanced/global\\_systems.php](http://www.coolgeography.co.uk/advanced/global_systems.php) - set of quizlets for you to test your knowledge.

### Climate Change – just some extra videos and reading if you want to learn more about this topic.

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**Video:** Climate Change the Facts – David Attenborough  
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/m00049b1/climate-change-the-facts>

**Video:** Panorama – Climate Change: What can we do?  
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/m0009drg/panorama-climate-change-what-can-we-do>

**Video:** The Disarming case to act right now climate change – Greta Thunberg (TED TALK)  
[https://www.ted.com/talks/greta\\_thunberg\\_the\\_disarming\\_case\\_to\\_act\\_right\\_now\\_on\\_climate\\_change](https://www.ted.com/talks/greta_thunberg_the_disarming_case_to_act_right_now_on_climate_change)

**Reading: Climate Change – The Guardian** have an excellent section on Climate Change which is frequently updated with articles and is well worth dipping into  
<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/climate-change>

**Reading: Climate Change – The Conversation** – a wealth of articles – frequently updated – highly recommended! <https://theconversation.com/uk/topics/climate-change-27>