

A Level Geography




Specification and PLC (Personal Learning Checklist)

AREA OF STUDY: 4 – Human Systems and Geopolitics

Topic 7: Superpowers

Autumn Term Y13

Overview: Superpowers can be developed by several characteristics. The pattern of dominance has changed over time. Superpowers and emerging superpowers have a very significant impact on the global economy, global politics and the environment. The spheres of influence between these powers are frequently contested, resulting in geopolitical implications

What do I need to know?				
EQ1: What are superpowers and how have they changed over time?				
7.1 Geopolitical power stems from a range of human and physical characteristics of superpower	I know how to define a superpower using contrasting characteristics (economic, political, military, cultural, demographic and access to resources)			
	I know the hard and soft mechanisms of maintaining power			
	I know how power has changed can change over time (Mackinder's geo-strategic location theory)			
7.2 Patterns of power change over time and can be uni-, bi-, or multi-polar	I know how the British Empire maintained power throughout direct colonial control			
	I know how neo-colonialism mechanisms have become more important in indirect control e.g. Cold War era, China's emergency as a rival to USA's hegemony			
	I know that different patterns bring different geopolitical strength and risk			
7.3 Emerging powers vary in their influence on people and the physical environment, which can change rapidly over time	I know that BRIC countries and other G20 members are increasing their influence over global economic and political systems			
	I know that emerging powers have evolving strengths and weaknesses that can inhibit or advance their role in the future			
	I know some development theory including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • World systems theory • Dependency Theory • Modernisation Theory And can use them to explain changing patterns of power			
EQ2: What are the impacts of superpowers on the global economy, political systems, and the physical environment?				
7.4 Superpowers have a significant influence over the global economic system	I know how superpowers influence the global economy through a variety of IGOs			
	I know how dominant TNCs can be in the global economy and cultural globalisation though technology (patents) and trade patterns and TNCs maintaining power and wealth			

	I know how cultural influence (arts, food, media) and ‘westernisation’ is an important aspect of power that links to influence and technology			
7.5 Superpowers and emerging nations play a key role in international decision making concerning people and the physical environment	I know how superpowers and emerging nations play an important role (global police) in global action (crisis, conflict, and climate change)			
	I know how alliances (military – NATO, ANZUS and economic – EU, NAFTA, ASEAN and environmental – IPCC) increase interdependence and are important for geostrategy and global influence			
	I know how important the UN can be to global geopolitical stability (Security Council, International Court of Justice, peacekeeping and climate change)			
7.6 Global concerns about the physical environment are disproportionately influenced by superpower actions	I know that superpowers demand resources and can cause environmental degradation e.g. CO2 emissions			
	I know there are differences to act as attitudes and actions vary from different countries e.g. climate change agreements			
	I know that the growth of the middle classes consumption in emerging powers will have implications on resource availability and cost			
EQ3: What spheres of influence are contests by superpowers and what are the implications of this?				
7.7 Global influence is contested in a number of different economic, environmental and political spheres	I know that there are tensions over acquisitions of physical resources (Arctic oil and gas) where ownership is disputed and disagreement exist over exploitation			
	I know that counterfeiting undermines intellectual property rights and strains relationships			
	I know that spheres of influence can be contests which leads to tensions over territory and resources e.g. South and East China Sea and Western Russia/Eastern Europe			
7.8 Developing nations have changing relationships with superpowers with consequences for people and the physical environment	I know that developing economic ties between emerging countries and developing world e.g. China and Africa increases interdependence, environmental threats but also opportunities and challenges			
	I know that the rising importance of Asian countries e.g. China or India can lead to increased economic and political tension in that region			
	I know that cultural, political, economic, and environmental tensions in the Middle East represent ongoing challenges from complex geopolitical relations and limited supplies of vital energy resources			
7.9 Existing superpowers face ongoing economic restructuring, which	I know that economic problems (debt, unemployment, social costs and restructuring) represent challenges to the USA and EU			
	I know that there are high costs of maintaining global military power (naval, nuclear, air, intelligence) and space exploration in some existing powers			

	I know the future of global power in 2030 and 2050 is uncertain and a range of outcomes (continued USA dominance, bi-polar and multi-power structures)			
Geographical Skills for Topic 7				
1.	Constructing power indexes using complex data sets, including ranking and scaling			
2.	Mapping past, present and future sphere of influence and alliances using world maps			
3.	Using graphs of world trade growth using linear and logarithmic scales			
4.	Mapping emissions and resources consumption using proportional symbols			
5.	Plotting the changing location of the world's economic centre of gravity on world maps			
6.	Analysing future GDP using data from different sources			

NOTES/CASE STUDY INFORMATION: